

25 MEGADRIVE GAMES FOR A TENNER – SEE INSIDE!
MEAN MACHINES SEGA
SEGA CHANNEL
DecAthlete
MOVE OVER LINFORD!
16-BLITZ!
MEGADRIVE'S BACK
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WHIZZ ● WORMS
POWER PIGGS
HELLO BOYS...
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1ST FOR SATURN
OLYMPIC SOCCER NIGHTS EXHUMED VIRTUA COP 2
VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDZ FIGHTING VIPERS STARFIGHTER

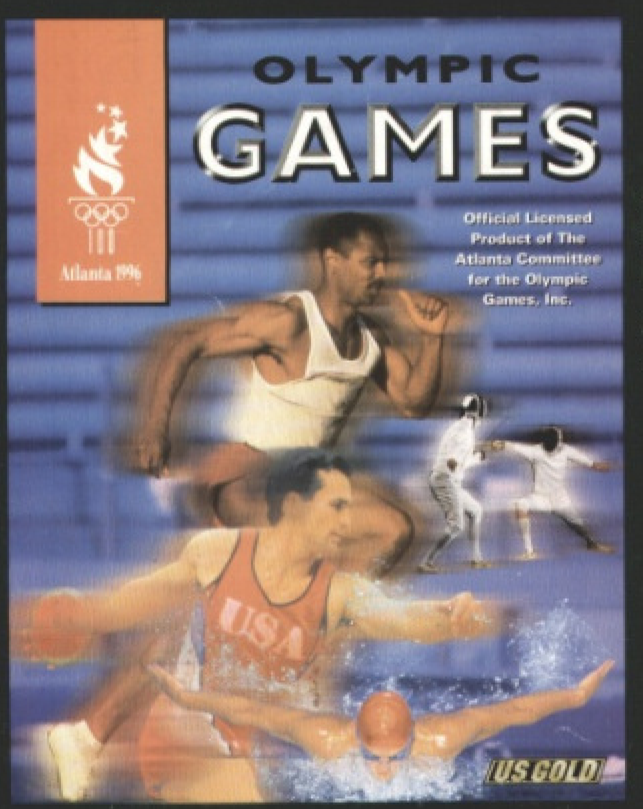
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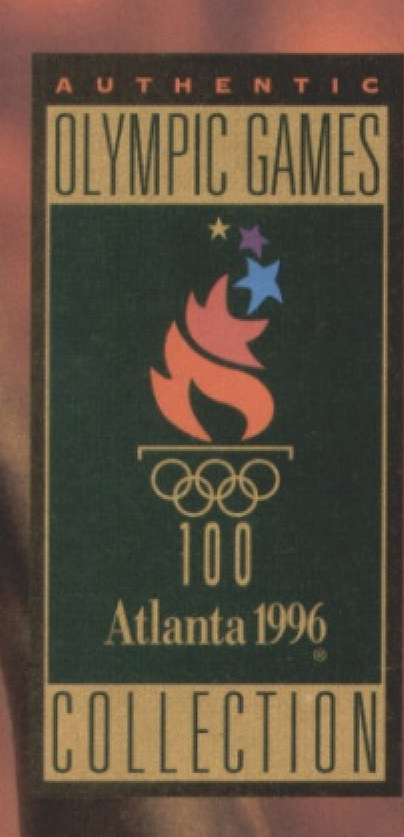
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CONTENTS

COVER STORY



TOMB RAIDER 16
Core unveil the incredible adventures of ace archaeologist Lara Croft – Tomb Raider. This game will leave you Quaking in your boots...

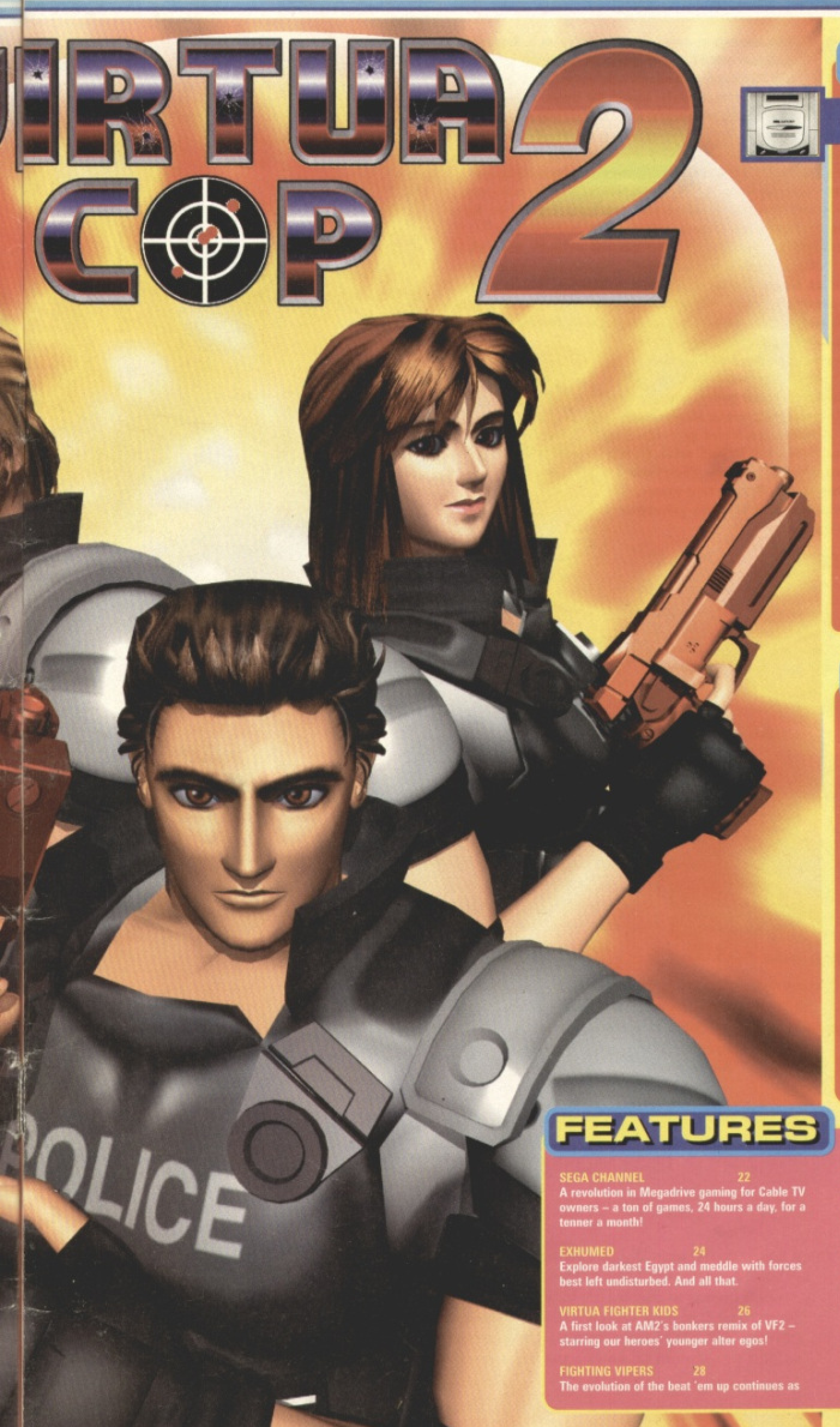


AT A GLANCE

(All games are Saturn format unless otherwise specified).

REGULARS





REVIEWS

SATURN

PREVIEWS

FEATURES



This month's question — Why are American games crap? A bit strong, eh? Of course not all American games are crap, but recently they collectively seem to have lost the plot. A couple of years ago US developers like Digital Pictures were convincing us that 'Interactive Movies' were the future of gaming. We now know better, but while Brit developers are working on games with an atmosphere AND full interacticity, like Tomb Raider, Americans are still trying to be a little Hollywood. If it's not dismal actors interrupting the levels, it's visual effects disguising clichéd gameplay, or baseball, baseball, baseball. Look at Sega Japan — Fighting Vipers, Virtua Cop 2 — screw the plot, enjoy the gameplay, and the games with plots like NiGHTS are flights of fancy only possible on computer. Some American coders stand out against the trend — Shiny, Id included — and more power to their non-corporate keyboards. The Americans have got one big chance to sort it out with Sonic Extreme. Let's hope they excel themselves. Enjoy the issue, and write and tell me whether you agree.



GUS

STAR TEST

Of course, no-one could ever replace Lucy, but we're going to give it a go anyway. Meet Nick, bought with a record transfer fee from Maximum magazine.



Name:	Nicholas Paterson
Date of birth:	4/6/73
Height:	6'0
Weight:	OK, hang on.
Marital status:	Single
Hobbies:	Music and disco dancing
Trouser size:	Oo er...

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

We've kicked Steve out, and sent Lucy packing, both of them older, wiser, and masters of their craft under the careful nurturing and guidance of the MEAN MACHINES team. Now Claire takes a new apprentice under her wing...



GUS

As Euro 96 progressed, Gus's interest in the football championships hinged on the highs and lows in the performance of his beloved Scotland. During crucial confrontations workmates were bemused, and visitors alarmed, to witness the irate MEAN MACHINES editor throwing things at the television screen, screaming obscenities at Scotland's opponents or members of his own team he found to be lacking. Despite their most loyal fan's fervent support, Scotland's ultimate fate was hanging in the balance at the time of writing. Fearful of the worst, the rest of the team have bribed the owner of Gus's local video shop to hide his copy of Braveheart. It's getting scary enough as it is.

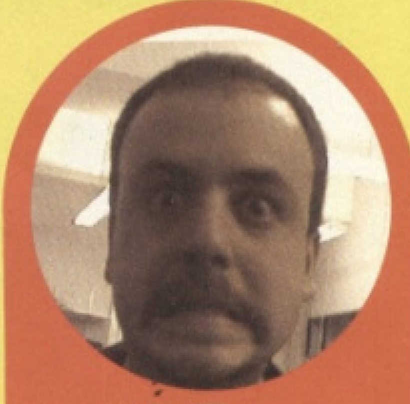




CLAIRE

"I've been to Le Mans," beams our globetrotting art editor, showing off her South of France sun tan. The rest of us reckon she went banger racing in Ipswich and rubbed tea on her legs afterwards, but Claire remembers Europe's premier 24-hour rally in convincing detail. "The food was great – we had a buffet of cured meats followed some excellent afters. My favourite were the praline mini-gateux with white chocolate wafers. There were some nice tartlets as well. I had them with the after dinner mints." It seems Claire's attention was easily diverted from the racing. When she wasn't eating, she was watching TV. "Well I couldn't miss Scotland **V** England, could I?"





MARCUS

Marcus has been following Euro 96 with the help of his super soaraway Sun Sports wallchart. "It's difficult sometimes," he grumbles, drawing connecting lines all over his poster. "I keep getting Andrei Kanchelkis mixed up with Hristo Stoichkov. I never have this problem playing Fifa." Not strictly true actually, but at least Marcus has had an intensive month of home improvement to keep his mind off football. Many is the day he's arrived splattered with paint and caked in polyfilla. "It was all going well until I came across this bump under the wallpaper that I couldn't squash down, however hard I hammered it." Marcus insists the recent disappearance of his cat is entirely unconnected.



ST - NICK PATERSON

Favourite game: Desert Strike and Sega Rally
Favourite film: Kodak ISO 200. Superb results whatever the weather.
Favourite soap opera: Eastenders
Least favourite soap opera: Neighbours, Eldorado. Anyone remember Albion market?
Least favourite game: But all games are good in their own little way [yeah right, Nick].
Most embarrassing record: Probably some dodgy old dance tune f rom about five years ago, that at the time I liked it so much I'd play it to my Mum and try and get her to like it too! There's loads others. Where shall I start, Duran Duran? [that's a good place to finish].
Favourite sandwich filling: Bacon lettuce tomato and Swiss cheese.
Best Dr Who: Tom Baker
Favourite thing about MEAN MACHINES: But it's all brilliant!
Least favourite thing about MEAN MACHINES: Where are all my freebies!?
Most embarrassing moment: This actually involves a number of people and a large tub of cream a small rodent and...[OK, that'll do. Has anyone got Lucy's new number?]



NICK

Unlike Claire, our new designer Nick was unconcerned about Euro 96. "I have been enjoying the odd tart though," he claims. "Well, it is summer after all." Drawing a discreet veil over such patisserie pleasures, Nick enjoyed a birthday during the production of his first MEAN MACHINES. "It was great. I got loads of brilliant presents from my mates and my folks – a game, some smart CDs, a new pair of flares and a Pamela Anderson poster." An office whip round was sadly less productive, falling some way short of the amount needed to buy Nick a chair to sit on while he's at work. "That's OK," he mumbles, putting a brave face on it. "This stool's fine. No, really. It's fine."



BRIAN'S BOX

Brian Lara Cricket '96 is the sequel to last year's chart-storming Brian Lara Cricket. The follow-up, which has entered the Megadrive charts at number one, was rated 90% by MEAN MACHINES and is on sale now at £44.99. Anticipating that you'd be understandably anxious to own this summer's essential piece of 16-bit software, we had a quiet word in Codemasters' shell-like and came up with some smart goodies for our latest competition. The two lucky winners of our cricket compo will each receive:



WIN!

A MEGADRIVE COPY OF BRIAN LARA CRICKET '96, PERSONALLY AUTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN LARA!

To be in with a chance of winning, simply tell us which team Brian Lara played for in February's Cricket World Cup. Put your answer on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope and send it to STICKY WICKET at the editorial address. The usual competition rules apply. Two winners will be drawn from the correct entries on Monday 12 August. Good luck!

EURO DREAM TEAM

PAOLO MALDINI
Steve 'world's best defender' Merrett
JURGEN KLINSMANN
Angus 'world class performer' Swan
DAVE SEAMAN
Claire 'big elbows' Coulthard
PAUL GASCOIGNE
Marcus 'likes a lager' Hearn
MICHAEL LAUDRUP
Nick 'creates chances out of nothing' Paterson

SUBSTITUTES
Pete Barell
Sam Hickman
Dave Kelsall
Steven Key

GHEORGHE HAGI
Andy McVittie
ANDREI KANCHELSKIS
Lisa Merrett
HRISTO STOICHKOV
Tina Hicks

Q & A PHOTOGRAPHY: Victoria Upton

SPECIAL THANKS TO: Dorian Bloch at Chart-Track, Gavin at BMG, Dave Wilson at Electronic Arts, Susie, Toby, Ken and Heather at Core, Steve at US Gold, Eileen and Jonathan at Carole Hayes.

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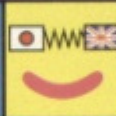
Gus's final message to anyone living South of the Border. We'll be back...

DOLBY SURROUND





DAYTONA 2: ROLLING START


DAYTONA CHAMPIONSHIP

SEGA

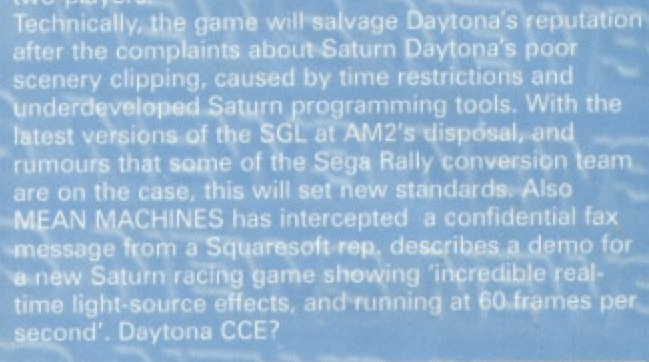
SATURN

RELEASE NOVEMBER

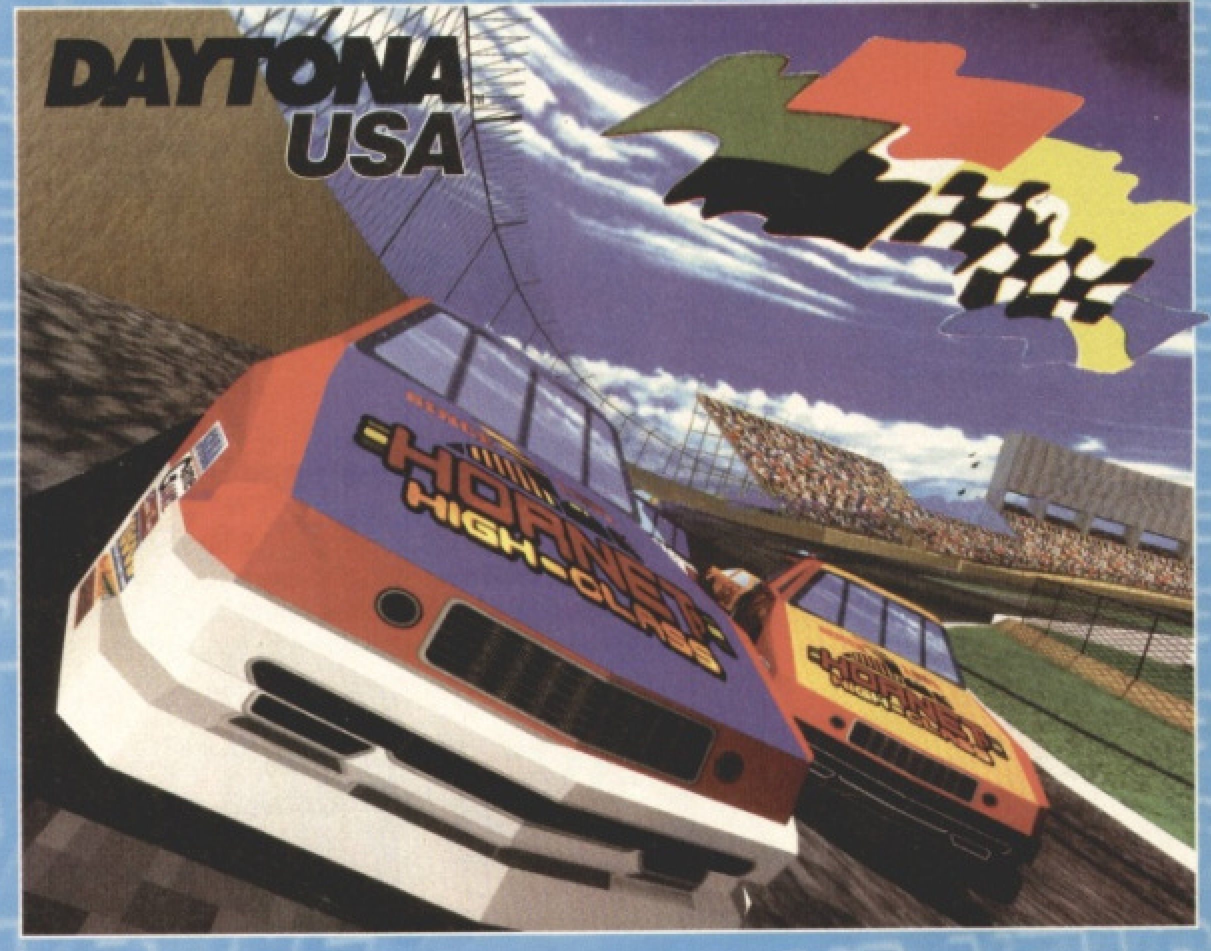
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Rumours of a 'Daytona Remix' for the last few months are finally scotched by Sega with the firm details of a new Daytona game. Daytona Championship Circuit Edition is set for a pre-Christmas release, and Sega sources predict it will eclipse all other Sega releases this year — Daytona USA on Saturn has been Sega's biggest smash in Japan, and Sega UK expect the sequel to outperform Sega Rally (still the fastest-selling CD game of all time). What's on offer? Daytona CCE goes far beyond the original, with updated versions of the previous courses and possibly three all new tracks. The Hornet car of the original is retained, along with new vehicles. The game will have a split-screen mode for two-players.

Technically, the game will salvage Daytona's reputation after the complaints about Saturn Daytona's poor scenery clipping, caused by time restrictions and underdeveloped Saturn programming tools. With the latest versions of the SGL at AM2's disposal, and rumours that some of the Sega Rally conversion team are on the case, this will set new standards. Also MEAN MACHINES has intercepted a confidential fax message from a Squaresoft rep, describes a demo for a new Saturn racing game showing 'incredible real-time light-source effects, and running at 60 frames per second'. Daytona CCE?



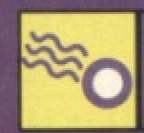
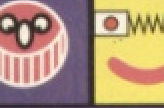
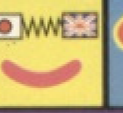
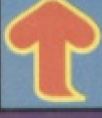


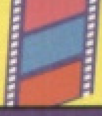
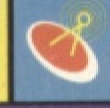


You may have wondered how we would top last month's first tidings of the E3 show. Read the same stuff much lster in other mags, didn't you? Well welcome back to the best NEWS pages in Sega-dom. And that's a fact.

KEY

competition

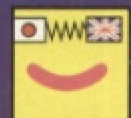
new game

japan news

tipped for the top

exclusive news

film news

news update

arcade conversion

gossip


british development



ONE NiGHTS IN HEAVEN




NIGHTS

BY SEGA

FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

ORIGIN: JAPAN

Feast your eyes on these in-cre-dible pictures of the complete version of NiGHTS, revealed to MEAN MACHINES on the day, nay the hour, we went to press! Soft Museum, Stick Canyon and Splash Garden are the three enchanting new levels revealed here. As before, Claris and Elliot share visit their own set of stages within the game and these three add to Mystic Wood, Frozen Bell and Rainbow Hill. The real excitement comes with the revelation of a two-player split-screen mode, where players choose between NiGHTS and his alter-ego enemy Reala in head-to-head mid-air combat! Play appears to be intriguingly complex, with bonus multipliers on the early courses required to attain an A-F status allowing you to reach these later levels. And we review it fully next month!

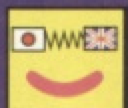








ZERO TOLERANCE




ENEMY ZERO

BY WARP

FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE TBA

ORIGIN: JAPAN

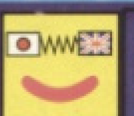


The follow-up to 'D' has been showing in Japan for a couple of months now. The original game has a huge following there and WARP have become just a bit famous. Their sequel takes Laura (heroine of D) and places her on a space liner under threat from mysterious unseen enemies. The gameplay style, 'interactive movie' rendered graphics is the same, but the game is much larger — taking up four CDs! The best news of all is that WARP have jumped ship and deserted Playstation, so Enemy Zero is exclusive to Saturn.





HEAVY ACTION




NBA ACTION

BY SEGA

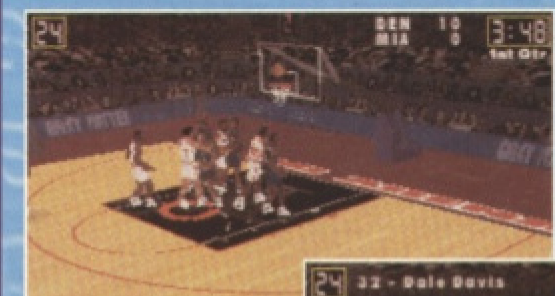
FORMAT: SATURN

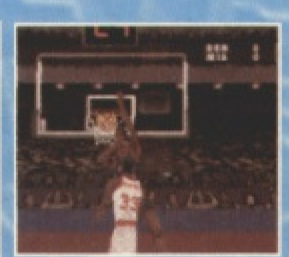
RELEASE AUGUST 1996

ORIGIN: USA



The range of basketball games is widening fast, with Sega's own NBA Action joining the quest for hoop dreams. The polygon perspective looks similar to those nice Playstation titles; Sony's Total NBA and Konami's In the Zone. The basketball officianadoes at Sega are really raving about this one, saying it has excellent scope for strategy play. We'll be the judge of that — next issue!









OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES

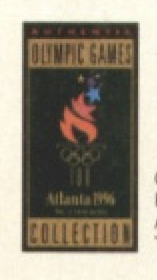
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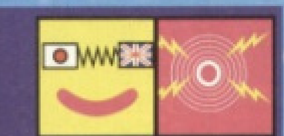
SUPER NINTENDO AND GAME BOY



T•HQ INTERNATIONAL LTD, 4 THE PARADE, EPSOM, SURREY KT18 5DH

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KEOI CHAOS



KEOI FLYING SQUADRON 2

BY: JVC

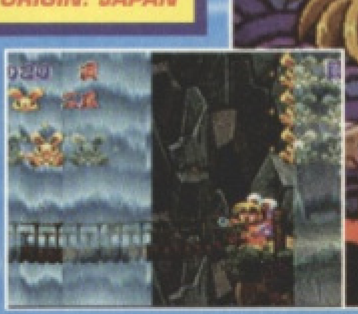
FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

ORIGIN: JAPAN

JVC resurrect an old Mega-CD standard with the sequel to Keoi Flying Squadron. The original games bizarre graphics are now in glorious 32-bit hi-res, and the gameplay stays faithful to platforming and scrolling shoot 'em up sections. This is one of the prettiest (and cutest) games to come from Japan in some time. Expect a UK review soon!



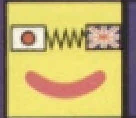








BOMBS AWAY!





BOMBERMAN

BY: HUDSONSOFT

FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE: IMPORT

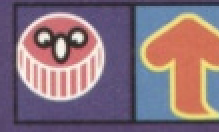
ORIGIN: JAPAN

Judged one of the great multi-player games of all time, Hudsonsoft's Bomberman is a major coup for any console to have. And the Saturn version is nearly complete! (Pity the Playstation doesn't have it, oh well, dearie me). The graphics closely resemble the old SNES and Megadrive game of planting bombs in 2-D mazes, but all kinds of new features like trains are found in the one-player game. But the crowning glory is a ten-player simultaneous cinder fest! Two multi-taps and a minibus of friends and you're off. Sega Europe have plans for a release here.





MYTH SHAPES



MYTH ADVENTURES

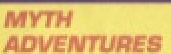
BY: VIRGIN

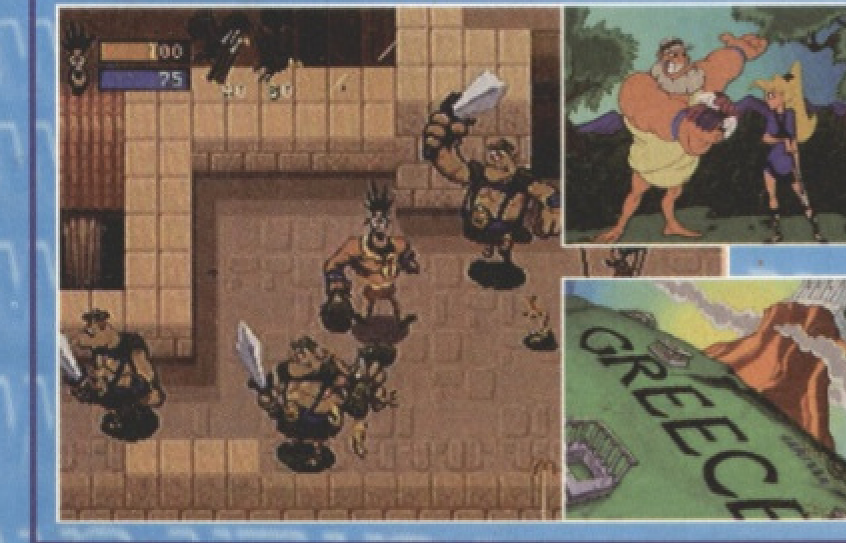
FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE NOVEMBER

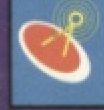
ORIGIN: USA

Lucas Arts, one of the world's great software companies, is hardly rushing to do Saturn stuff, but this is compensated for by one definite Sega project: Myth Adventures. It's a comic-beat 'em up puzzler thing with some great Asterix style graphics and promises to be something different for Chrimble.





CODIES PRESS A POINT





VARIOUS

BY: CODEMASTERS

FORMAT: SATURN

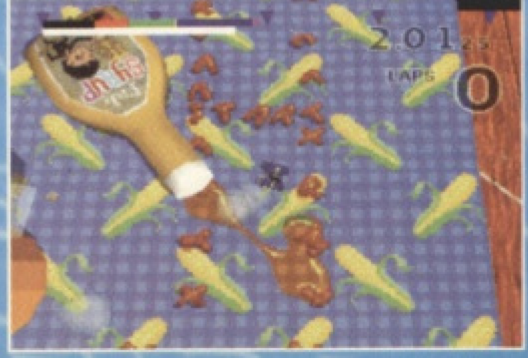
RELEASE AUTUMN

ORIGIN: UK

Revving up for their forthcoming Saturn releases — work on Micro Machines is already underway — Codemasters have made a controversial outburst championing the cause of 'pure gameplay'. "Out with the notion that than an interactive movie can ever be a game", spouts their Marketing Director, "screw slapping cosmetics on quickly just to get out the door first". They have a point considering Brian Lara '96 is sitting astride the Megadrive chart. With Micro Machines at least, it looks like their putting money where their mouth is. Richard Eddy is 47.







PIG OUT



POWER PIGGS OF THE DARK AGE

BY: TITUS

FORMAT: MEGADRIVE

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

ORIGIN: FRANCE

Titus have decided to enter the not-so-busy Megadrive market in a big way (see previews of Whizz and Prince of Persia 2). Their third Megadrive title is the strange Power Piggs of the Dark Ages. It's a platformer based on a 'wacky' cartoon that never got made. There's lots of running around avoiding wolves in drag. Do you get the picture of do you want a review?





GETTING A GRIP



PADS

BY: SEGA

FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

ORIGIN: UK

A small piece of news to gladden the hearts of arthritic Saturn owners or real gamers everywhere. One of the most aggravating things about the 'restyling' of the Saturn in this country is the pad. The perfectly good Japanese pad was turned into an awkward carbuncle. Happily, Sega are taking the opportunity of the remodelled UK Saturn to produce a black pad exactly like those in Japan. Huzzah. Unfortunately, UK Saturns will still be 'no nonsense' black, unlike the colourful 'Flash Saturns' we all lust after.



GOSSIP

Alarming rumours first — that GT Interactive are pulling out of Saturn. Alarm bells rang with news that ad campaigns have been shelved. The prospect of losing Doom, Quake and the recently announced Duke Nukem 3-D would depress a large segment of Saturn owners. Tell us its not true. Better news on the arcade front. My friends at Hamley's Metropolis have informed me that the place has been totally refurbished so more of the big Sega coin-ops can be squeezed in. Soon to arrive are Thunderblade NY and Decathlete. If you're in London, checkout Hamley's basement. Susie from Core called me, to announce the traditional 'slipping of the Core title' bit. This time it's Ninja, the very ambitious samurai game shown in our ECTS issue, a couple of months back. Instead of August/September, the release has been put back to 1997. But she did tell me about an 'incredible' project by the Thunderhawk 2 team, which is top secret. And Blam is looking nice. Sorry Susie. Just after last issue closed we found out that Travellers Tales, the great brits behind Toy Story are the programming team behind Sonic 3-D. With these lads on the case it's advance orders in now. Finally the great Squaresoft mystery. These guys produce the biggest selling Jap RPGs and are incredibly influential. We intercepted a fax from one of their agents, raving on about new Saturn techniques and possible hidden hardware lying unused within the machine. Is he right? Are Squaresoft going to sign up with Sega? Join gossip next month and you may find out.

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN





FIGHTER ATTACK

BY: EMPIRE

FORMAT: SATURN

RELEASE LATE 1996

ORIGIN: UK

Some Saturn owners have grieved over the lack of proper flying sims on the system, but Empire Entertainment are planning to plug that gap. Fighter Attack is the Saturn adaptation of a PC World War I sim called 'Flying Corps' they have in development. The game is set over northern France in the time of the legendary dogfights of the Red Baron et al. Empire plan to strip out most of the boring simmy bits that appeal to PC nerds, so we Saturn owners get countless missions of reckless playabilty. More news soon.







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CREAM OF SEGA

OFFICIAL CHARTS © ELSPA COMPILED BY CHART TRACK

It's that time of the month when we spin the platters that matter, courtesy of our good buddies at ELSPA, Chart-Track, and you, the readers. Euro '96 has shaken up the Saturn top ten enormously, Brian Lara Cricket '96 making a similar impact on Megadrive sales. But will both of these be able to stave off some strong competition? The hype chart, meanwhile, is showing that the remainder of 1996 is looking very rosy indeed for Saturn owners...

HYPE CHART

The games we, and you, voted as our most eagerly awaited

1 (-)
TOMB RAIDER
Will be even better than we'd hoped.

2 (-)
NIGHTS
This is going to be groundbreaking.

3 (4)
ALIEN TRILOGY
Now the readers' favourite.

4 (-)
FIGHTING VIPERS
It'll be a tricky conversion, but this should be awesome.

5 (-)
DAYTONA CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT EDITION
We're all holding our breath for this.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Thanks for the huge response to our readers' charts. Each month we list the games you most want and those you are looking forward to. Just fill in the coupon. Also, take a guess at what the most popular game of the month will be. One of those smart enough to guess the top of the reader's chart will win a copy of that game!

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

I'M MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

I PREDICT THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Send to: Cream of Sega, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

SALES CHART: SATURN

Chart Track's guide to the best-selling CDs.

1 (-)
EURO '96 (Sega)
King of the footy games – straight in at the top.

2 (-)
STREETFIGHTER ALPHA (Virgin)
Capcom's greatest beat 'em up yet?

3 (3)
VIRTUA COP (Sega)
Now the guns have arrived these are shifting bucketloads.

4 (1)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI (Sega)
Awesome blaster.

5 (4)
SEGA RALLY (Sega)
32-bit game of the year is still a Saturn-seller.

6 (8)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (EA)
Will this get hurt by Euro '96?

7 (7)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (Sega)
A Megadrive Virtua Fighter is on the way.

8 (6)
WIPEOUT (Psygnosis)
Still the Saturn's trendiest racer.

9 (2)
X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM (Acclaim)
The Pal version is disappointing.

10 (-)
DAYTONA USA (Sega)
A Saturn classic – soon to be updated (see Hype Chart).

ELSPA

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

Chart Track's guide to 16-bit sales.

1 (-)
BRIAN LARA CRICKET '96 (Codemasters)
A new spin on an old fave.

2 (1)
TOY STORY (Sega)
Predicted to become Sega's biggest seller of the year.

3 (2)
FIFA SOCCER '96 (EA)
Still the top 16-bit footy game.

4 (3)
SONIC & KNUCKLES (Sega)
At a new official budget price.

5 (-)
TAZMANIA: ESCAPE FROM MARS (Sega)
Discounted oldie bounces back.

6 (-)
MS PACMAN (Time Warner)
Puzzle fun, often discounted.

7 (-)
MEGA BOMBERMAN (Sega)
Another fave from days of yore.

8 (4)
AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE (EA)
Upside down curiosity.

9 (10)
MICRO MACHINES 2 (Codemasters)
Outselling the updated version!

10 (6)
SONIC 2 (Sega)
Another low-price classic.

ELSPA

OFFICE CHART SATURN

Our choice of the next generation titles.

1 (-)
OLYMPIC SOCCER
We reckon this is the best Saturn footy so far.

2 (-)
EXHUMED
Like Doom. But better.

3 (-)
IRON STORM
Gus is addicted to last month's strategy import.

4 (1)
PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
Real long term playability.

5 (-)
SEABASS FISHING
Don't laugh – it's good!

READERS CHART SATURN

Your choice of the best Saturn titles.

1 (2)
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
Still the king of fighters.

2 (-)
VIRTUA COP
The 'big three' are unstoppable.

3 (1)
SEGA RALLY
The best console driving game ever. Fact.

4 (-)
X-MEN:COTA
Capcom's cartoon classic.

5 (-)
WIPEOUT
Futuristic hover racing.

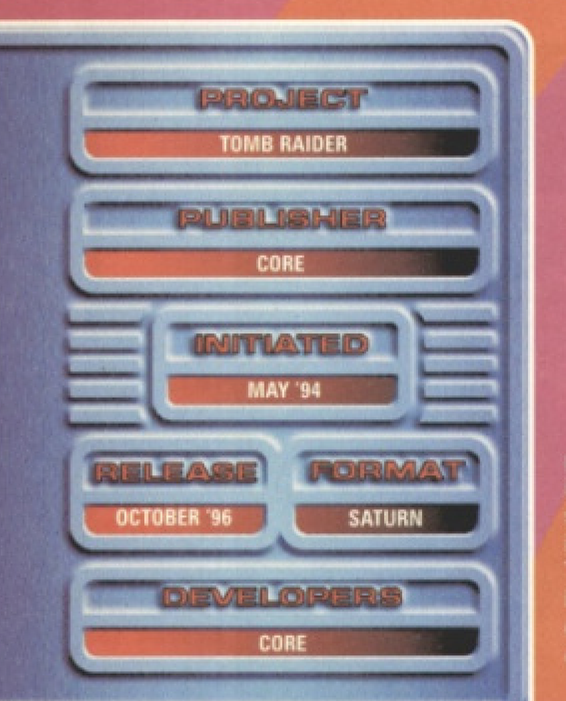
I'VE GOT THIS EARLY MORNING ROUTINE.

OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.

I CLEAN MY FACE WITH **OXY DAILY WASH** EVERY MORNING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT SPOTS. IT CLEARS MY PORES OF THE MUCK AND GREASE THAT CAUSES THEM. **SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM!**





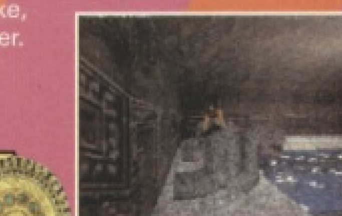


Tomb Raider first came to our attention early last year, as little more than an interesting idea and a single atmospheric image of a rather shapely young figure silhouetted against the entrance to some mysterious temple.

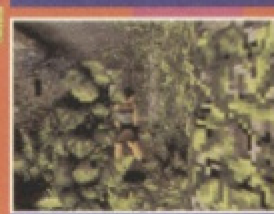
A lot of flesh has been added to the bones since then and finally the nine-man team behind Tomb Raider are allowing their incredible new games heroine, Lara Croft, to step out into the light.

Make no mistake, this young vixen has got it bad! But the programming involved in bringing this 3-D arcade adventure to life is almost as sexy. Lara has been enlisted by a powerful and shady syndicate to search for a mythical object known as the Scion, split into three parts each located in a ruin of the ancient world.

This is set to be Core's biggest ever game. The months have gone into writing a game engine that blows Delphine's Fade to Black, even Id's Quake, out of the water.



Lara standing behind an ornate dragon fountain.





Areas of the ancient Ican ruins succumb to the jungle.

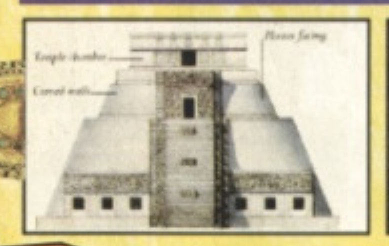
FORGOTTEN WORLDS

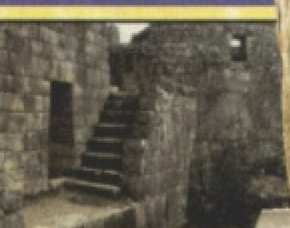
A conscious decision was taken to set Tomb Raider in 'real' locations inspired by past cultures documented by explorers and archaeologists. Heather Gibson and Neil Boyd, the game's level designers, have immersed themselves in the culture of three civilisations to create the game's stunning locations. The fourth level, Atlantis, is still a mystery...

THE INCAS

A civilisation that flourished for hundreds of years in the Peruvian rainforests of South America. The Incas built huge terraced temples in the heart of the jungle. Their culture was fascinated with gold and ritual sacrifice. Their race was obliterated by the Spaniards, who conquered the New World in the 1500s.

LEVEL DESIGN: Waterfall; Barracks; Central Square; Palace; Harem; Sacrificial Area; Crypt; King's Chamber





TOMB RAID



CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

The Golden Age of Greece, and later Rome, lasted for 500 years before Christ. Many examples of their incredibly developed art and culture survive. They built huge temples, decorated with tile mosaics and sculptured reliefs of their gods and heroes. Their conquests, like those of Alexander the Great, brought fabulous treasures from the entire ancient world.

LEVEL DESIGN: Library; Meditation Garden; Baths; Coliseum; Underwater resting place.













Is this awesome or what? Hard to believe these are in-game shots.



Meet the fittest character ever to appear on Saturn; explore your silicon dreams with Lara Croft: Core's Tomb Raider.

TOMB CLONE

In Tomb Raider, you're exploring a large 3-D map, You're solving puzzles, you're killing beasts. The very original mix has influences of previous games (all classics) that the game designers will readily admit to:

YOU ARE JUMPING

Look to the great Prince of Persia in much jumping off ledges, the ulcer-inducing leaps across chasms and the ability to cling to ledges.

YOU ARE SOLVING

Lara has an inventory, shown very 'Alone in the Dark' style, and the objects she carries will be used to solve the game's conundrums. These range from activating switches to finding objects.

YOU ARE SHOOTING

Lurking in shadows of are creatures out for your blood. Lara's twin revolvers ensure plenty of Doom-style shoot outs, but the game's third-person viewed perspective give it a totally different feel.

Defend yourself against bloodthirsty alligators.

THE EGYPTIANS

The vast power of Egypt rose with the pyramids, around 2700BC. It became the great Nation of the Middle East, and many of its incredible edifices remain today; the Pyramids of Giza, and the temple of Abu Simbel, built on the order of Akhenaten, the heretic Pharoah. The vast wealth and inscrutable pictoral culture of Egypt lies under the sands.

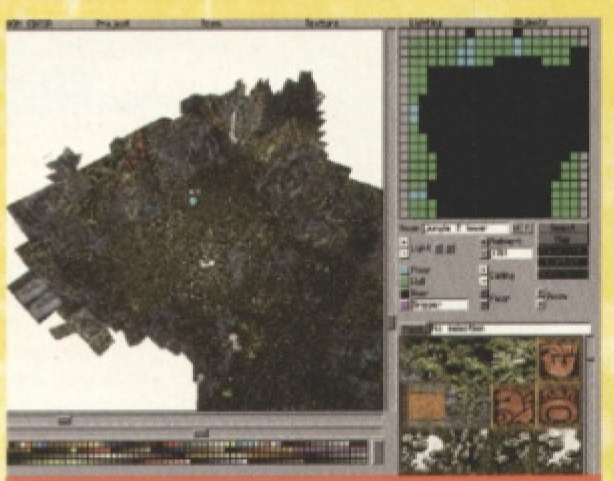
LEVEL DESIGN River; Temple; Star Map; Queen's Chamber; King's Chamber; Altlantean puzzle test area (mental, physical, fighting)

A dog yelps in anguish as Lara moves into 'execution mode'

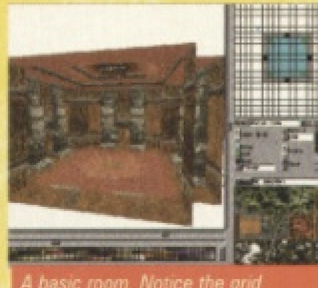


CULTURE SHOCK

Heather and Neil are responsible for designing and furnishing Tomb Raider's levels. First, a wire-frame 3-D outline of the room is created. The basic requirement is that each room has an opening — a link to other rooms — and walls. Imagination can then run riot, creating elaborate chambers or tiny corridors. Walls are decorated by authentic textures adapted from ancient sources. Finally, dynamic light-sources are added, that take account of intensity and shadows.



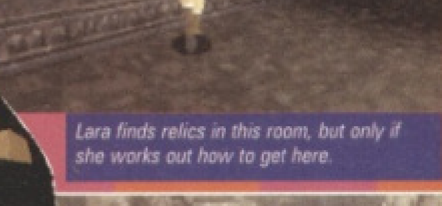
The editor is flexible enough to create neat rooms or sprawling caves.



A basic room. Notice the grid corresponding to pillars and exits.



Part of the texture palette used to decorate the Incan levels.



Lara finds relics in this room, but only if she works out how to get here.

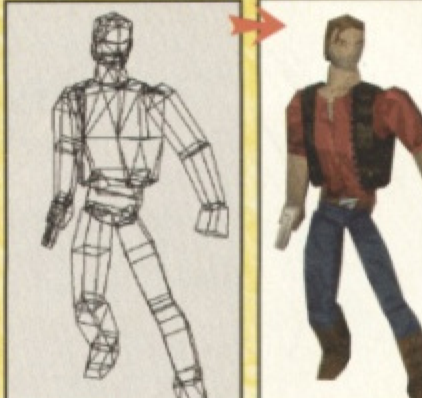


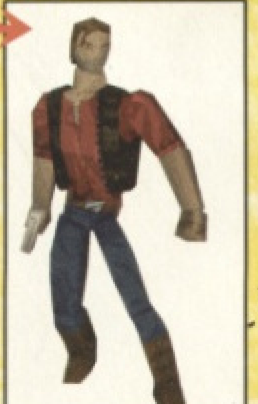
Fleeing from a couple of vampires.

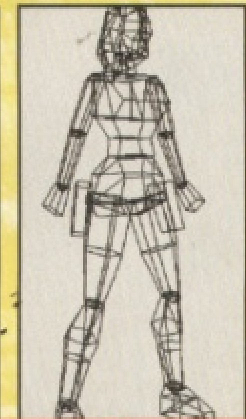
CROFT'S ORIGINAL



'Lara enjoys working with underprivileged children and the mentally disabled. She has a degree in needlework and loves to travel. Lara's one wish is to ski down Mount Everest with Brian Blessed strapped to her back. The simple reason for having a main character as a woman is that if you are looking at a character all the way through a game, the more pleasing on the eye it is, the better'.
Tomb Raider design document.

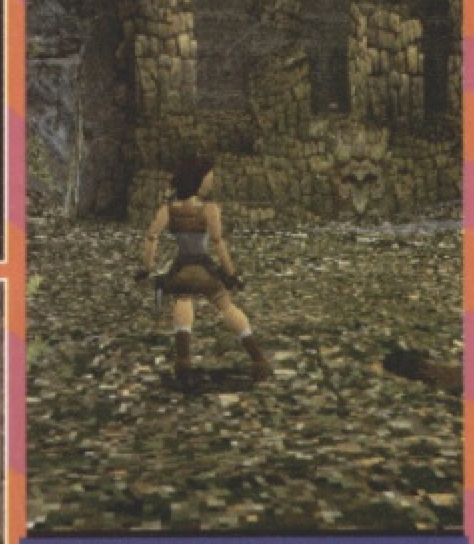






Hundreds of polygons, shown in these wireframe renders go into Lara and Pierre Dudont.





Lara moves into a heavy scenery area.



SPOT CAMERA
Used for the vast majority of gameplay. The camera automatically follows behind Lara, giving a clear view of the direction she is facing.

Coming up for air and Lara never looked happier.

Swimming is a sensational experience, and beautiful to watch.

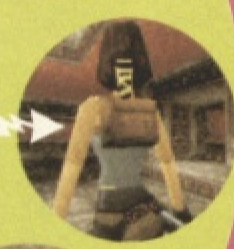
LINE OF SIGHT
The virtual camera is of enormous importance in Tomb Raider, and has absorbed a huge amount of the team's attention. There are no less than four basic camera modes switched between during play. Switching between these will be seamless, as if the game was a live-action movie.



3 POINT VIEW
The camera focuses on an object other than Lara and views it from an angle that has her in between (the diagram makes it clearer). This mode can be used to focus on a threat or offer clues for items not in Lara's direct line of vision.

DYNAMIC PAN
An automatic mode where the camera circles or pans with Lara as its subject. Used for dramatic effect.





CAMERA CONTROL
A camera override button allows you to move Lara's head, looking up, to the side or from above her head.

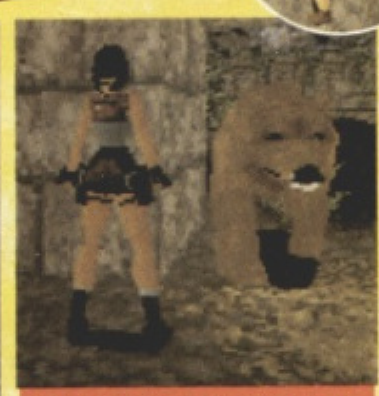
EXTERNAL
Occasionally the camera watches Lara peform a specific act (eg using an object) from a set point. Like Alone in the Dark/ Resident Evil.

ANIMAL MAGIC
The thinking behind Tomb Raider's living hazards is strikingly original. To make the game more 'real', many of the creatures are factual animals, which react in believable ways. Bears lumber around, wolves attack in packs, circle and pounce, crocodiles waddle and monkeys gambol on all fours. On top of this, impressive artificial intelligence makes your foes harder to fox. Enemies will search you out, being either timid or aggressive. Timid enemies may flee your shooting, hiding elsewhere in the level, and even aggressive enemies will retreat if they realise they cannot get to you.



PLANNED CREATURES Snakes, bats, giant lizards, lions, sharks, centaurs, pumas, bears, wolves, crocodiles, monkeys. And many more...





The bear with the sore head. Let's just say he ain't Nookie.



MOVE YOUR BOOTY

Lara's movement is astonishing. Motion capture isn't used — Toby Gard, the main programmer believes in conventional key animation to get the precision and clarity required. Lara is a complex figure of around three hundred polygons. She's super-smooth, even close-up, but it's her range of movement that's most impressive.





armed

mid-air combat

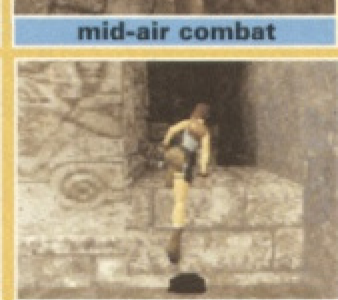
running

walking

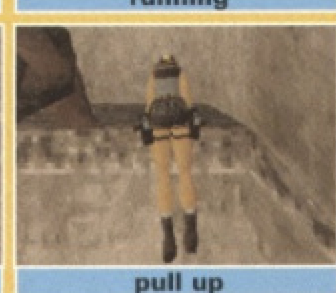
vertical jump



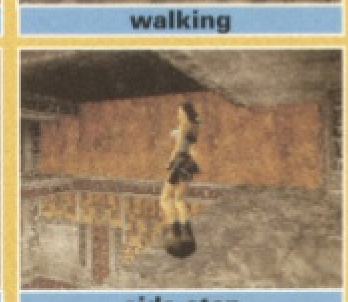
jump



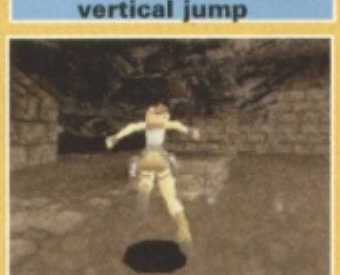
scale



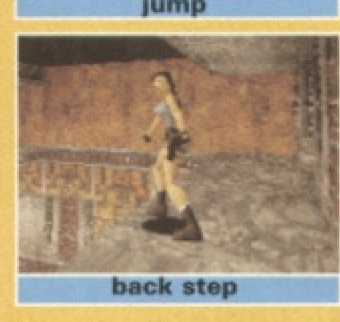
pull up



side step



back jump



back step



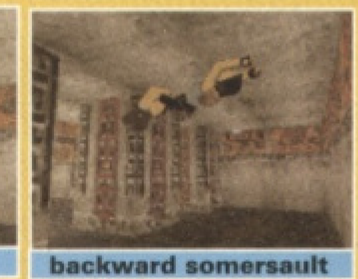
hanging



forward somer

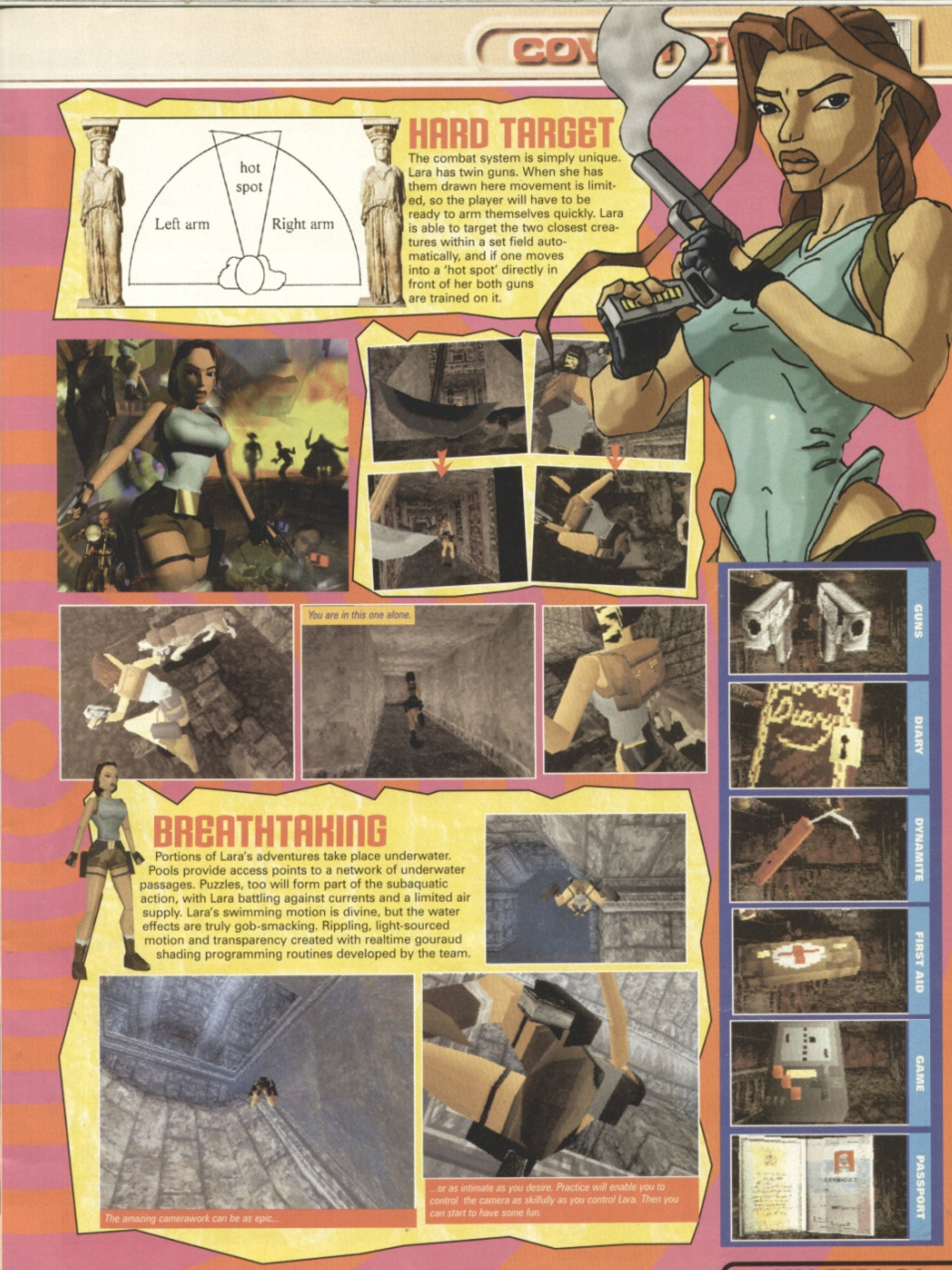


somersault



backward somersault

Other intelligences are out to stop you. Meet Pierre Dudont...



HARD TARGET

The combat system is simply unique. Lara has twin guns. When she has them drawn here movement is limited, so the player will have to be ready to arm themselves quickly. Lara is able to target the two closest creatures within a set field automatically, and if one moves into a 'hot spot' directly in front of her both guns are trained on it.

You are in this one alone.

BREATHTAKING

Portions of Lara's adventures take place underwater. Pools provide access points to a network of underwater passages. Puzzles, too will form part of the subaquatic action, with Lara battling against currents and a limited air supply. Lara's swimming motion is divine, but the water effects are truly gob-smacking. Rippling, light-sourced motion and transparency created with realtime gouraud shading programming routines developed by the team.

The amazing camerawork can be as epic...

...or as intimate as you desire. Practice will enable you to control the camera as skilfully as you control Lara. Then you can start to have some fun.

SEGA C

Sega Channel is coming, and it's offering a sensational deal to Megadrive owners. For just £10 a month subscription fee, you have access to 25 Megadrive and Genesis titles, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, unlimited playing time. That's 40p a game.

The amazing deal is open to those connected to the Cable TV network, as Sega Channel is passed along the fibre-optic network along with conventional TV signals. Each subscriber has an adaptor that plugs into their Megadrive cartridge slot and links it to their cable signal adaptor. By turning to the Sega Channel like any other, a user selects a game from the on-screen menu and downloads it into the Megadrive, and then plays as long as he likes. There are five 'rooms' covering game themes of The Arcade, Strategy Room, Family Room, Sports Arena and The Speedway.

At the moment, the service is being offered by one Cable company, Telewest, on a limited tryout. The service has been available for only a few weeks, but by Christmas Telewest hope other cable operators will be offering Sega Channel too. Get ready to gorge yourself on games!

SEGA CHANNEL



ELEVEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SEGA CHANNEL

1: WHO IS SEGA CHANNEL?
Sega Channel is a consortium of Sega of America, TCI (the cable company who own Telewest) and Warner Bros. They'll be liaising with Sega UK, who are not directly involved.

2. WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR SEGA CHANNEL?
You need a cable connection with Telewest, or one of the other cable companies who may soon start to carry the channel. Then you need an adaptor. Telewest will probably offer the adaptor FREE when you subscribe to Sega Channel.

3. ARE THERE ON-LINE CHARGES?
NO! Sega Channel is not like the internet. You pay nothing above the £10 a month subscription. The game is downloaded from the 'Head End' into your Megadrive.



4. HOW LONG DO GAMES TAKE TO DOWNLOAD?
Between 40 and 45 seconds.
Connection to the system is instant, and their server (which passes out the signal) can handle thousands of subscribers at any time.

5. HOW GOOD ARE THE GAMES?
Being honest it's a mixed bag, but there are enough good games to make it worthwhile for any Megadrive owner. The games also cover all areas of gameplay; sports, puzzle, shoot 'em up and strategy. Judge the list for yourself — Thor, Mean Bean, Ranger X and Sonic 3 are all classics of their time.

6. HOW OFTEN DO THE GAMES CHANGE?
Each month, Sega Channel uploads a new CD-ROM which has 25 new titles. 80% of these will be different from the previous month. Naturally, popular titles will stay on the network.



CHANNEL

7. HOW BIG IS THE LIBRARY

Sega Channel has access to a mind-boggling 700 Megadrive/Genesis titles, many of which have never been released here. Okay, a lot of these will be crap, but we anticipate users will be loading up bizarre titles like Berenstein Bears just to 'log them'. It will also be a retro gamers heaven.



8. WHAT ABOUT NEW GAMES?

This is the good part: Sega Channel have signed a deal to 'test drive' unreleased titles on the system before they come out. Demo versions with limited levels or gameplay will appear a month or so before the cartridge goes on sale. Imagine Sonic 3-D a month early! Also, games should return to the channel in full form about three months after release.

9. WHAT ABOUT NETWORK PLAY?

There is the potential for Sega Channel to allow multi-player gaming. This works with cable's 'Return Path' interactive ability. However, there is no concrete plan to introduce this, Sega Channel just want to get the system established first.

10. WHAT ABOUT SATURN?

Again, the potential exists to extend Sega Channel to 32-bit systems, but the company will be concentrating on Megadrive for the forseeable future. So, although Saturn Channel may be a prospect in some years, it's 16-bit only at this stage.

11. CAN I GET IT ON SATELLITE?

No. Sega Channel will be exclusively cable. Satellite channels like Sky work through transponders, which are more expensive to run than cable channels. Sega Channel could work on satellite — the decision is commercial, not technical.





SAMPLE SEGA CHANNEL LISTING

This is the service offered to a lucky set of homes in the South-East of England this month. Would you pay £10 a month for these?

Alien Storm; Batman Returns; Brutal Paws of Fury; Chuck Rock; Forgotten Worlds; Golden Axe II; The Incredible Hulk; Ranger X; Sonic 3; Super Shinobi; X-Men; Mean Bean Machine; Shining Force 2; Story of Thor; Barney's Hide and Seek; Berenstein Bears' Camping Adventure; Flicky; Garfield: Caught in the Act; California Games; ATP Tennis Tour; International Rugby; Striker; G-LOC; Outrun 2019; Super Thunderblade







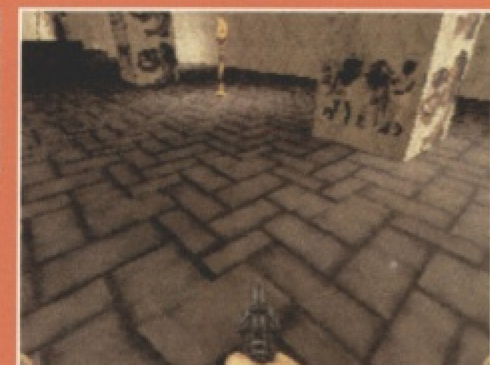
PROJECT	EXHUMED
PUBLISHER	BMG
INITIATED	JANUARY '96
RELEASE	AUGUST
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	LOBOTOMY INC.

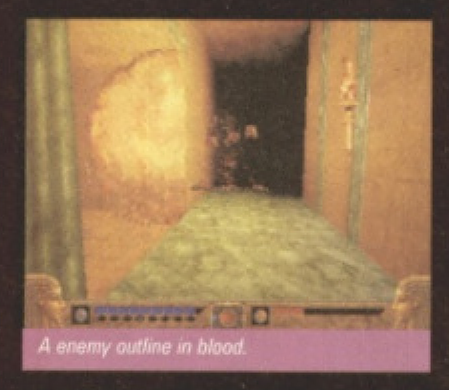
Welcome to your Doom. Well, not your Doom, but your Doom-clone in Egyptian clothing.

EXHUMED

Set in twenty-seven levels of Egyptian antiquity, the tombs, temples and pyramids of Rameses II, Exhumed is a 3-D maze blaster at heart, with puzzle elements thrown in, and a touch of programming panache that is making the name of the Lobotomy Software team who put it together. Coming from the pool of SNES and Megadrive programmers who have now graduated to the superconsoles, Exhumed is a project which BMG reckon is 'making the Saturn sing'. As it's release will predate Doom, we're taking them very seriously.

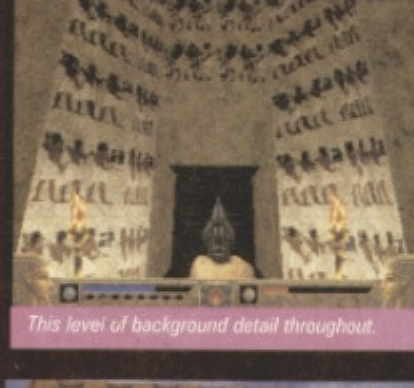




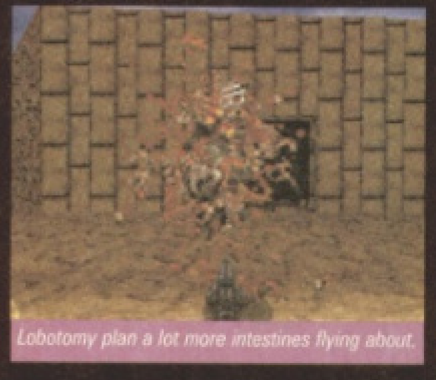


A enemy outline in blood.

The Fire Ring is a delight to use.



This level of background detail throughout.



Lobotomy plan a lot more intestines flying about.

REASONS WHY THIS IS NOT DOOM

REASON 1:YOU CAN LOOK UP

One of the joypad functions allows you to change the angle of sight, looking up or down. This becomes an intrinsic part of gameplay.



REASON 2:YOU CAN JUMP

An ability absent from most Doom-style games is jumping. Exhumed uses it quite a bit for tiered levels. It's almost a platform game in places.



REASON 3:YOU CAN SWIM

As Lobotomy have designed such a lovely translucent, rippling water effect, it's only proper you can dive in. Waterways and aqueous areas will figure significantly in gameplay.



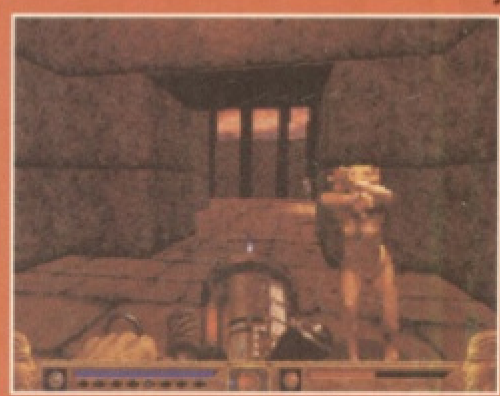
REASON 4:YOU GO BACK

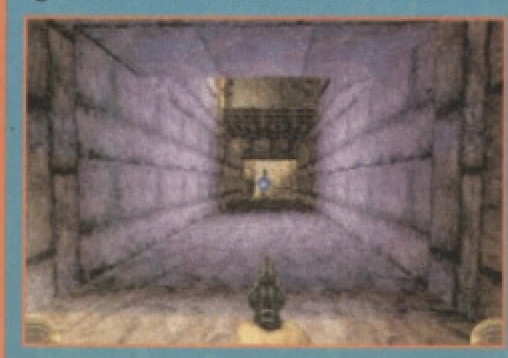
There are six hidden artifacts that grant the player new powers. With these you can return to levels to explore further.



SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

Exhumed is a most surprising and delightful demonstration of light-sourcing. This effect, also seen in Gremlin's Loaded, created auras and shading on background that move realistically. In Exhumed an explosion or magical weapon will cast glows against walls and other creatures.









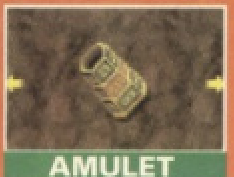
GRENADE



STAFF OF RA

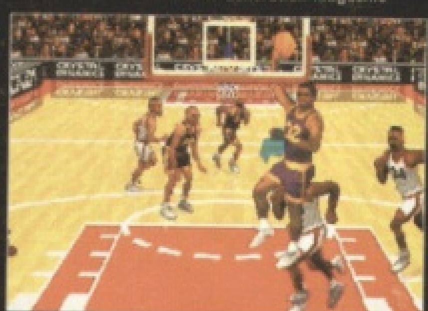


MACHINE GUN

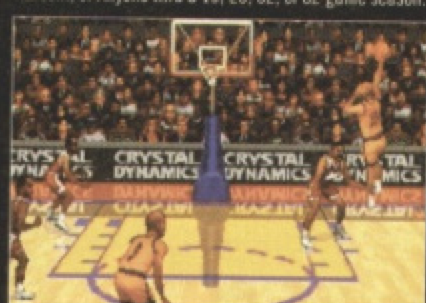


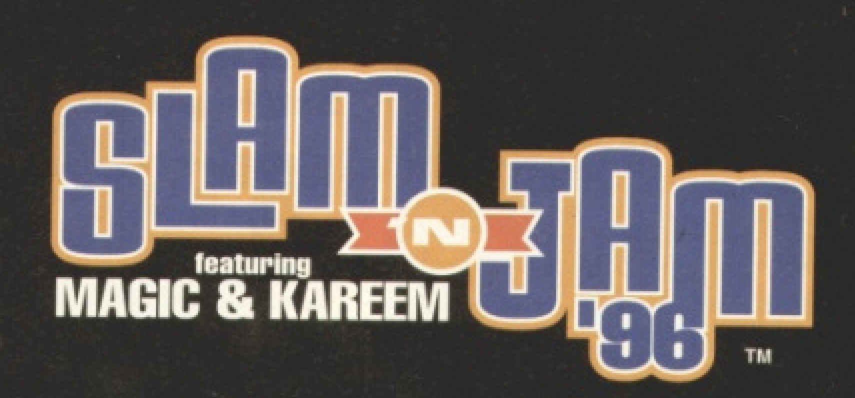
AMULET

"This fastpaced, first-person basketball sim does a phenomenal job of bringing players into the action."
— *NEXT Generation* magazine



Franchise player mode lets you abuse opponents like they were players for an expansion team. Control Magic, Kareem, or Anyone thru a 13, 26, 52, or 82 game season.





THE NO-LOOK PASS.
THE SKY HOOK TO BEAT THE BUZZER.
MORE THAN A SIGNATURE ON A BOX,

IT'S A LICENSE TO DOMINATE.

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PROJECT
VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS
PUBLISHER
SEGA
INITIATED
JANUARY '96
RELEASE
NOVEMBER '96
FORMAT
SATURN
DEVELOPERS
AM2

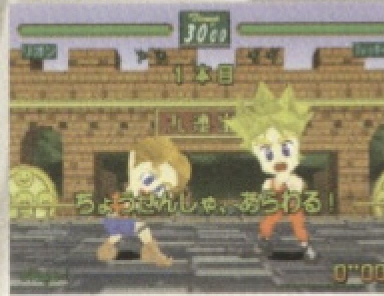
It started as a joke, and now it's part of the Sega battle plan: Super deformed Virtua Fighter Kids!



There's at least one in every class. Maybe you can picture them now as you're reading this. You may be him. The kid with the big head. AKA 'Tefal', 'Boff', 'Alien'. But come October, having a oversized bonce will no longer by a liability in the playground. It may even be fashionable, because that's when Saturn Virtua Fighter Kids is due for release.

It began with some of the 'lads' at AM2 mucking about (they probably got bored with sticking 'kick me' signs on Yu Suzuki's back), by deforming the famous characters of Virtua Fighter 2 – now gaming royalty in Japan. The lithe, lean body of say, Sarah Bryant has become a stumpy child-like figure with an oversized head and big cute eyes. And so with all the rest. The phenomenon, known as 'super deforming' has been part of Japanese culture for years, it's basically done to appeal to kids. Now that the Saturn is cheaper, with the bright flash Saturn designed to draw young users away from their famicoms (Super Nintendo) Sega are trying to turn them on to Virtua Fighter.

The new character look also mirrors the hugely popular Virtua Fighter dolls, which are available only as prizes in arcade crane 'catcher' games. The game has been developed first for the arcade, but as it uses the ST-V system (see box) which is very similar to Saturn conversion is proving no problem.





THE GREAT TEA SCANDAL!

In Japan, Sega are taking every opportunity to use their games to advertise. Virtua Fighter Kids is one of the most blatant, with a tie-in with the Java Tea company (producers of a popular Nipponese beverage). The kids take swigs between bouts, with Shun, who we all know has a bit of a thirst, tossing it back like nobody's business. Sadly, this will be reprogrammed for Europe, where 'Java Tea' means diddly squat.

THIS IS ST-V

ST-V is Sega's bargain bucket arcade system. Unlike the swanky model 2 and new model 3, the technology is average. But it's useful because 1) It's cheap 2) It has the same innards as the Saturn and 3) Different game modules can be switched. It's also easy to port over games quickly. This is it's performance so far...

GOLDEN AXE:THE DUEL

An okay fighting game that shows ST-V is good with sprite games.





It's always the same – closing time every Friday night Lau staggers in bevvied up, looking for someone to smack...



"You lay another finger on him and I'll get the social on to ya! I should have listened to my mother. You're an animal!" etc.

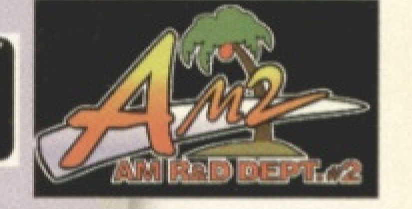
CHILD'S PLAY

The moves and indeed combos of Virtua Fighter Kids are the same as those of Virtua Fighter 2. The new look means that the animations will be totally different, but veteran players will pick up the action quickly. The main gameplay difference is making the response and timing simpler so that younger players find it less demanding.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

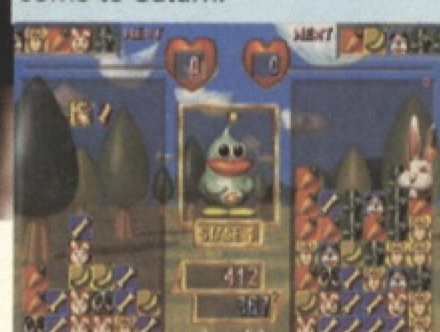
People love the intro to this game. Sick people, who enjoy watching the big Virtua Fighter characters appearing to give their Kid counterparts a good kicking.

ST-V™ SEGA VIDEO GAME SYSTEM



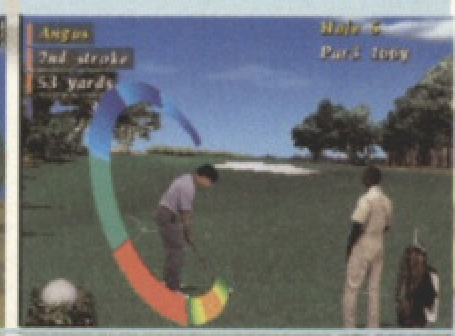
BAKU BAKU ANIMAL

AM3 mucking about, showing how quickly an ST-V game can come to Saturn.



PEBBLE BEACH GOLF

Showcases the ST-V's excellent 'corner of pub' credentials.



FUNKY HEAD BOXERS

Hmmm. ST-V trying to be 'wacky' to disguise lack of power. Not Saturn bound.



DECATHLETE

Still 'under construction' but shows ST-V is okay with polygon characters.





Sega unleashed Fighting Vipers at the end of last year. It led a clutch of titles which again used the Model 2 board first developed for Daytona USA and Virtua Fighter 2. It's better than VF2 (at least in the arcade), we'll set our stall out on that at the start. It's the most vicious, ruthless, evil beat 'em up devised. Instead of glancing blows and dainty fireballs, you're grabbing the opposition and banging their heads into electric fences.

AM2 are undertaking the conversion themselves and it will be the combat of 1996, considering VF3 will not be appearing now until '97. The latest version of the Sega Graphics Library (SGL) is being used to convert the game to Saturn, and Sega are confidently predicting a gameplay-for-gameplay match. Although the Saturn may not be able to match the excesses of the Model 2 board, the eight characters techniques and styles will be replicated.

The work done already, shown here, is stunning, with two characters rendered in realtime and the familiar barred arenas and backgrounds taking shape. We'll be following developments on this explosive game very carefully.



FIGHTI

BAHN







GRACE

JANE

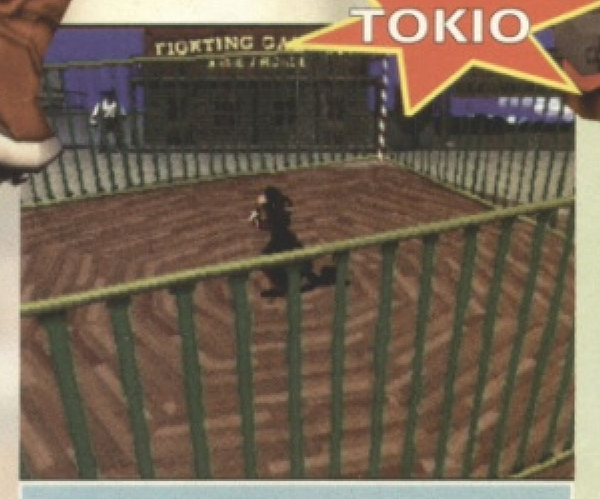
TOKIO

SECOND SKIN

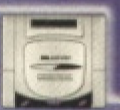
The characters all wear the most outlandish and provocative protective wear seen in games. Armour ranges from Honey's blue leather and chantilly lace outfit to Grace's skater-babe lime-green get out. All this dubious clobber is designed to shield the fighters from damage, but it too can be removed by a particularly savage combo. When this happen a rapid-fire replay from three different angles shows the shock move.



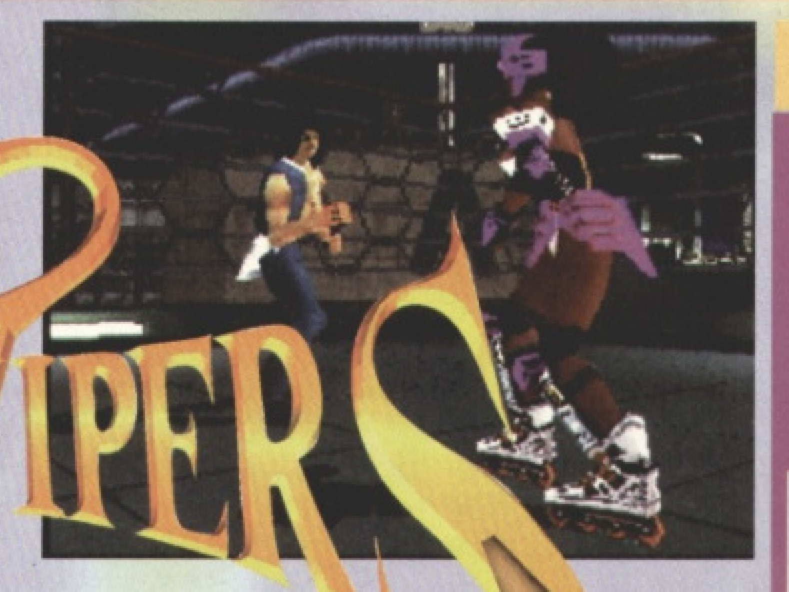
Wouldn't you like to remove Grace's clobber? Well learn the correct combo and it's disco-time.



Bahn stands alone in AM2's demo shot which goes to show that the first tricky conversion bit — the fencing — is in the bag. Notice the flat background, however. All in all it's an A- for AM2 so far — keep up the good work!



Oh lordy, it's the Fighting Vipers: Eight go totally apest in beat 'em up land.**



JAIL BAIT

The action takes place behind bars, with the fighters treated like caged animals. If the ruck reaches the edge of the ring, fighters have slamming moves, grappling their opponents and striking them against the fence repeatedly. The humiliation is made complete when a round is ended on a super knockout, with the vanquished exiting the ring unceremoniously, taking the fence with them.





TING VIPERS

PICKEY

HONEY

SAN MAN

RAXEL

BARNEY ARMY

Which of these eight nutcases is you? (You can't choose Bahn, because that's Gary Harrod from Maximum magazine).

HOW WILL THEY DO THAT?

The 4,800 yen question is how AM2 will adapt some of the frankly impossible effects present in arcade Fighting Vipers to the lowlier Saturn hardware. The 3-D backgrounds are a struggle for starters and these pictures clearly show the Saturn version using a scaling bitmap (a two-dimensional image) as a backdrop like Saturn VF2. This may be temporary, of course, as catapulting into the background is a fairly neat part of the gameplay.





PROJECT
PROJECT: OVERKILL

PUBLISHER
KONAMI

INITIATED
JAN '96

RELEASE
OCT/NOV '96

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
KCEC (KONAMI US)

It's been a long time since Konami have developed anything for the Saturn – in fact, we thought they'd stopped doing stuff altogether. But it seems they were fooling us all along. This year they're back with a title that's sure to make even the most enthusiastic gore fan's stomach turn...





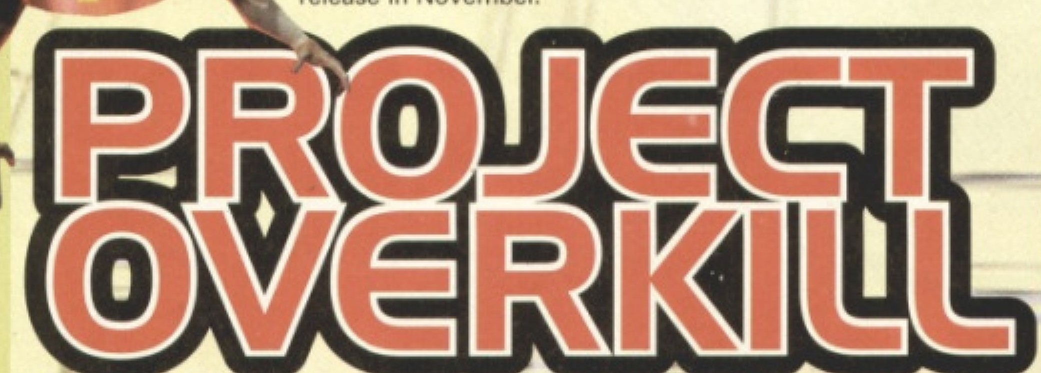
If there's one thing that stands out about the people working on Overkill, it's their ardent passion for anything with a bit of gore in it. They've had plenty of time to develop their pet hobby too as, since undertaking the project, all they've done is think of more ways to include blood, guts and viscera in their straight-for-the-jugular isometric shoot 'em up.

The result of this, depending on your viewpoint on video game violence, is either the best thing since MK3, or the most disturbing Saturn title to date. Shoot an incredibly ugly monster, then stand back and watch as his guts spray on to the wall behind. Then do a little dance in his blood and pitter-patter his entrails throughout the level (if you stand in an enemy's blood, it will stay on your feet and leave trails wherever you walk). Yep, this may be a seen-it-all-before blasterama, but there's no way you've played anything *quite* like this. The closest thing like it on Saturn is probably Loaded, but after playing Overkill for a few minutes, it seems very tame in comparison.

If you wanted to describe Overkill in the most basic way possible you'd probably say "Why, it's like that old classic Gauntlet, but with better graphics and loads of fancy effects." But although Overkill uses the basic principles seen in games like Gauntlet (run around maze-like levels, blowing away baddies and collecting keys to allow entry to the next level), there's something much more compulsive about this souped-up Nineties version of the game. The sheer body count certainly makes it more fun and little effects like the recoil on a body that's just been pumped full of lead will have you jumping with glee.

The Saturn version of Overkill is still in its very early stages, but we'll be keeping you updated until the game's release in November.

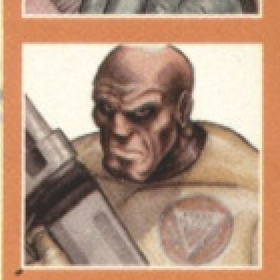
These trolls float over the levels and are very violent.

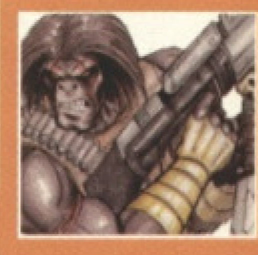


PROJECT OVERKILL

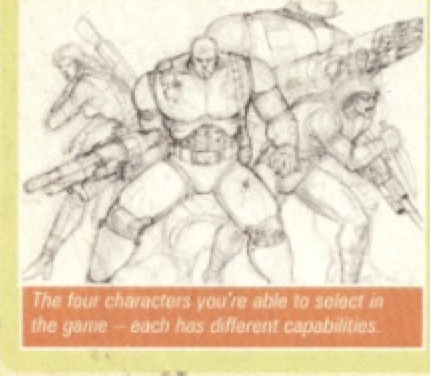








This thing spits goo at you from distances. Close up though, it's lethal.



The four characters you're able to select in the game – each has different capabilities.





A UNIQUE CONTROL SYSTEM

Remember Smash TV? No? Well, it was quite a long time ago. Well, Smash TV in the arcade had this unique control system where one hand controlled the direction of the sprite and the other hand controlled the directional fire. This is exactly how the controls work in Overkill – the standard directional part of the joypad controls the sprite and your choice of four buttons on the right, controls the fire – in up to a 45 degree spray to whichever way the character is facing. This means you can pick the enemies off with much more ease and it means you waste less firepower too!







HACK! SLASH! MAIM! KILL!

Blood. Standard fodder in any shoot 'em up, but in Overkill, it's used to great effect. Pump a round into an enemy, then watch their guts splatter on the wall behind, or shoot them in the head and watch a purple projectile emanate from their brain. Let's get one thing straight here, Overkill is not for the faint-hearted and in the States at least it will come equipped with an MA rating – for mature audiences only. With such an abundance of viscera, it would have been quite easy for the programmers to stray into the realms of bad taste, but the end result just adds to the humour of the game and it definitely beats giving the characters green slime instead of the real thing. Another nice touch is that after blowing your enemies away, they don't just disappear into thin air, and they don't re-appear when you revisit the room. Nope, they stay there, lying in their own blood for the rest of the level.

Never get on the wrong side of Gus in the morning.

Or Marcus for that matter.

So, it's a bit of a gory game then?

He might look a bit hard, but he's really, really easy to kill. As long as he's on his own.

I'LL TAKE THE HEAT SEEKER!

There's loads of variety in the weapons you can use in Overkill, from a basic hand knife to retina scanners, rocket launchers and heat-seeking missiles. These can be picked up throughout the game, and will run out unless you keep them constantly supplied with ammo. The weapon variety is essential, as some enemies are virtually immune to some attacks and can only be killed in a certain way. For instance, there's even an invisibility weapon so you can sneak up behind some of the visual-sensitive enemies and stab them in the back. Then sit back and watch his comrades panic while you pick them off one by one!



Oh what a jolly wheeze of Sega's last year, when they made an ad for Virtua Cop by asking a real 'lag' what he thought about it. Shame they couldn't get enough games 'n' guns into the shop for the psychopathic Saturn fraternity, because when Cop got into the shops, sales went mental.

How does Sega respond to such a demand for a brutal, merciless killing spree of a title? Pander to it with a sequel of course, and it's the arcade sequel too. Cop 2 is leaps and bounds ahead of its predecessor, and the Saturn is coping admirably with the conversion.

James 'Smarty' Cools and Michael 'Rage' Hardy are joined by Janet 'ere she's a woman' Marshall. Sadly, much as they'd like, they can't all play together and someone has to make the tea while the other pair cruise around Virtua City killing people. Like 'Cop, it's shooting gallery-style reflex action, taking targets out as they appear as you shuffle round a pre-ordained level route. But this time there's more; more enemies, more action, and more blood.

AM2 have put together this 'arresting' level 1 demo — the shots you see are all Saturn — but there's a lot of work to do yet.

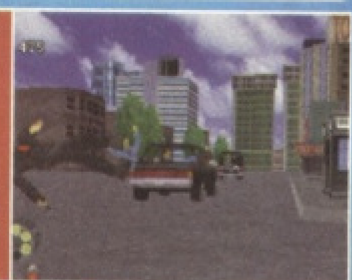


"Yippie-ay-yey money funster! You fun my wife? You cakesucker!" The ITV version of VC2.



"You feelin' lucky punk?" A reckless perp goes ahead and makes your day.

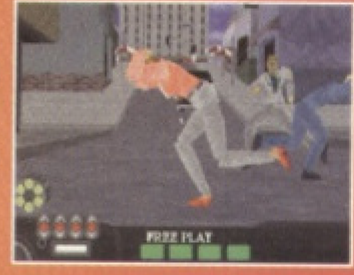




Hapless onlookers scatter like skittles in your never-ending quest for justice.



OUR RECONSTRUCTION TONIGHT...



The life of VCPC has become rather more exciting. The first level takes you through a jeweller's heist, a hair-raising car chase (Burt Reynolds appears to be behind the wheel) and a showdown outside a Hackney towerblock, with hoodlums practically hanging out the windows. Rather more varied than you're average CrimeWatch reconstruction. Of all these, the car chase is the most impressive, as MEAN MACHINES doubted whether the fast polygon shifting could be sustained with enough detail. How could we have doubted AM2? There's a perfect sense of recklessness as you skid around corners, narrowly missing pedestrians.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT...



to remain silent...



You also have the right...



to collect your internal organs...



from the sidewalk and place them...



SHARP SHOOTER

'Cop 2 is a feast of joyous little visual details. The Saturn version includes the spinning chandelier in the jeweller's, and the little glass gem cases. Look out for bonus baddies, who try to sneak past your line of fire. There's twice the amount of shootable targets of Virtua Cop, and loads more civilians caught in the crossfire!

JUST GIVE ME 24 HOURS!

There are two other levels to the game, more complicated than Stage 1. The first of these is a jaunt through a huge luxury yacht, owned by some shady smuggler types. Cross the Coronation St. cruise special with the Poseidon Adventure and you have the idea. The finale has you foiling a bomb plot by infiltrating a huge underground base. Both these levels allow you to choose routes at the signposted intersection, like Panzer Dragoon 2, lengthening the game's appeal.

Erm, that's the Virtua City car park.

in a Sainsbury's carrier bag...

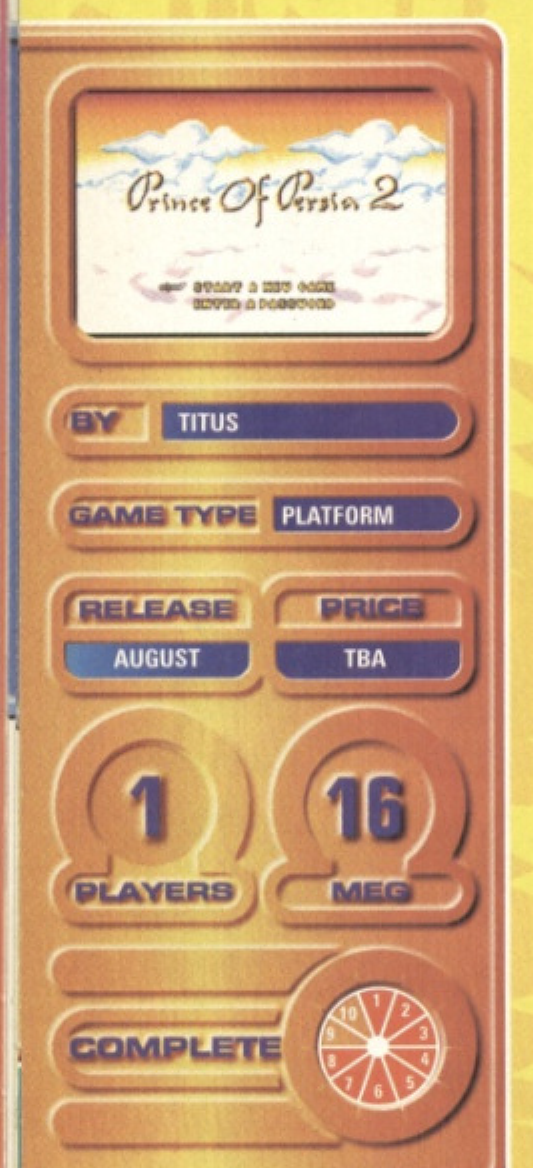
before getting the hell out of town.

The getaway motor speeds away.

"I said no shooters on this job! Alwight?"







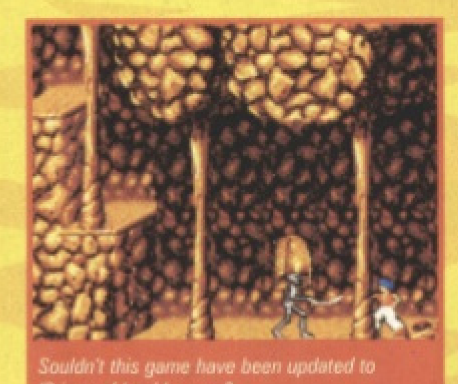
Calling all fans of bloody hard games — we've got a bloody hard game for you. Titus' Prince of Persia 2 will be redefining the meaning of the word frustration in just a few months time.

The games cognescenti among you will have worked out this is a sequel, to the legendary Prince of Persia, which was 'Top of the Pops' around four years ago. Both games were developed by a nutter called Jordan Mechner, who started them out on PC, then insisted on porting them over to every format in Christendom (except, of course, 32X).

Part 2 takes up where Prince of Persia left off, with various fanatical towel-head pyjama-wearers chasing the young hero out of a Persian palace. Once he's made his way across the sea, he stumbles across a treasure 'n' trap stuffed cave that will test his nubile young body to the max, and your joystick skills similarly.

Yes, POP2 is a platformer, but of a different style to the norm. The levels are constructed meticulously from a series of flip-screens of tiered platforms. Making your way through each stage is a nightmare, as false floors, spikes, lava pools and the common or garden long-drop-of-doom lurk everywhere. Luckily, you have an impressive range of control, allowing you to take running or standing jumps, grab ledges, lower yourself, crouch and string all these together into sequences. The end goal is the hand of a kidnapped princess and fabulous wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.


Towel-headed turbulence is the order of the day as our dashing prince swings from ledges and dangles from, er, dangly things just like he did in the original game.

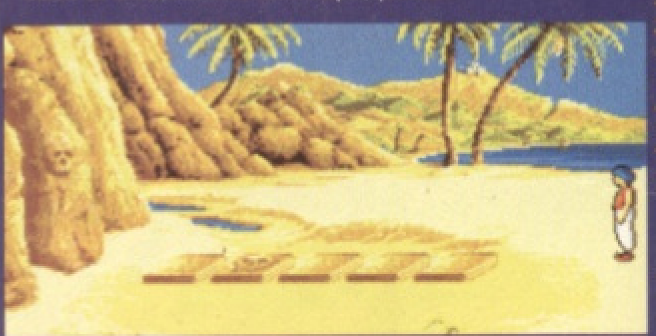

Souldn't this game have been updated to 'Prince of Iran' by now?





CRYPTIC CAPERS

Although the game is really one big puzzle, Jordy's added some interlude sections which are focussed on your grey matter. The first, and not so difficult of these, is the entrance to the cave. Five tiles cross a pool of quicksand. One has a strange symbol. Oh, I wonder which one opens the door? Answers on the back of a Gladiators envelope, please.



I'll teach you! Cop that, you filthy blackguard!

Now, where did I park my carpet?

...nce Of ...rsia 2



Quite risky this bit – our hero is called upon to dash along ramparts, scale castle walls, leap drawbridges and dice with death at every turn. He's never going to make the jump to that jetty though – not in those shoes.

Golden Voyage of Sinbad-style shenanigans with cutlass-bearing skeletons in this level. Mercifully, there isn't a golden fleece, comedy relief pirate captain or paper-thin plot in evidence as well.

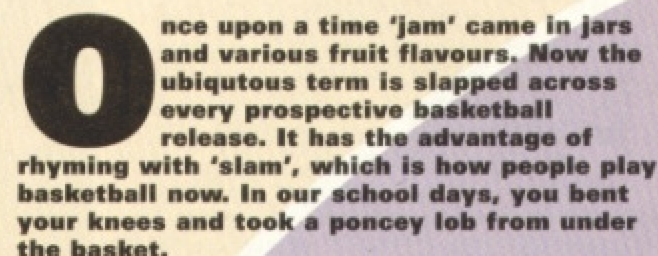
RUSTY CUTLASS

You are regularly called upon to take eyes out and rearrange internal organs with your evil banana-shaped scimitar. Combat is entered whenever a guard or unnatural enemy comes on screen. By drawing your sword with the C button, a new range of thrusting and parrying commands become available. Inevitably, there can be only one.

LOADED'S THE CREAM AND I'M THE PUSSY
VOX
Gremlin INTERACTIVE
LOADED
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BY	BMG
GAME TYPE	BASKETBALL
PLAYERS	1-4
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	JULY
COMPLETE	



SLAM N JAM '96

Once upon a time 'jam' came in jars and various fruit flavours. Now the ubiqutous term is slapped across every prospective basketball release. It has the advantage of rhyming with 'slam', which is how people play basketball now. In our school days, you bent your knees and took a poncey lob from under the basket.

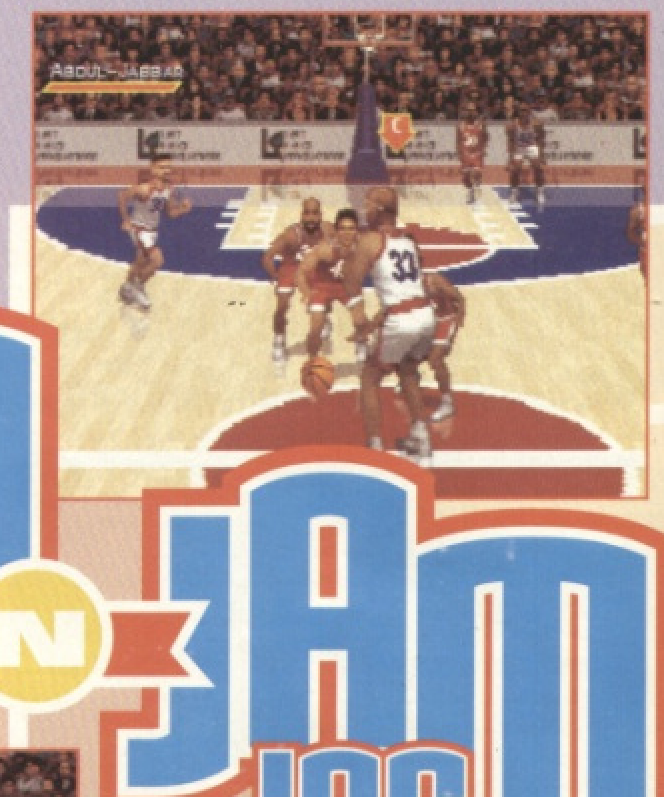
In Crystal Dynamics' sports arena, this is not permissable! All the full-bloods of America's NBA leagues are present, with special endorsement coming from long-legged superstars Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (supposedly a guest star in 'Airplane'.)

S&J '96 is an update of BMG's 3DO game of (almost) the same title last year, with crisper graphics, smoother 3-D and sprites that stay defined close-up. It uses a fixed 3-D perspective, with your team always playing into the screen, which requires some adjustment.

Otherwise, da rules is basketball.

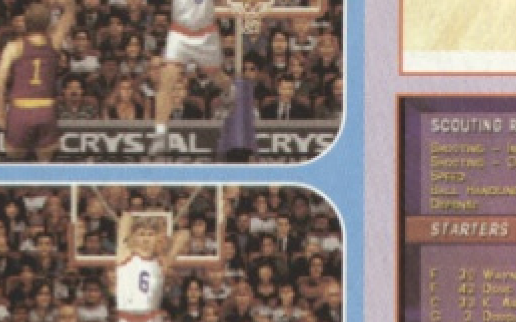
SLAMMING JA?

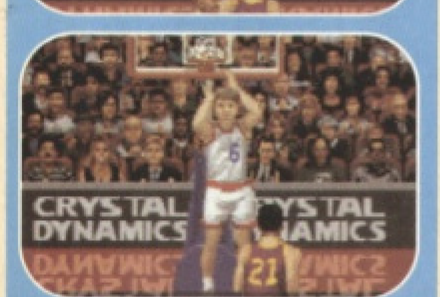
Play as Sweden. If you so desire. International teams are included to bulk up the usual American conferences and leagues. There promises to be all the statistics you may want, though this option was not completed for the previewable copy.



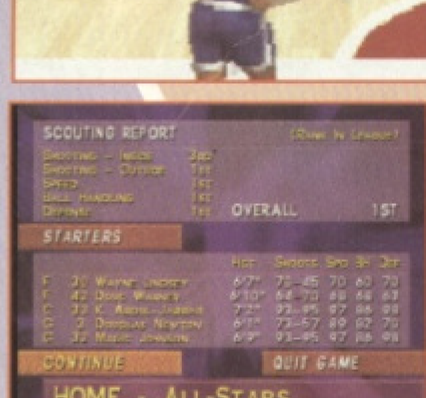
COACH JAM

The gameplay potential is revealed the more you play, as the computer reveals tips and snippets of wisdom at the end of each quarter. These range from reminding you of techniques you're not using, or showing how they can be employed to best effect.

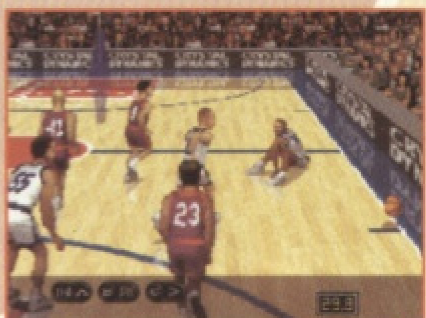




Try to avoid getting snagged in the hoop. They left him hanging there for weeks, poor bloke.



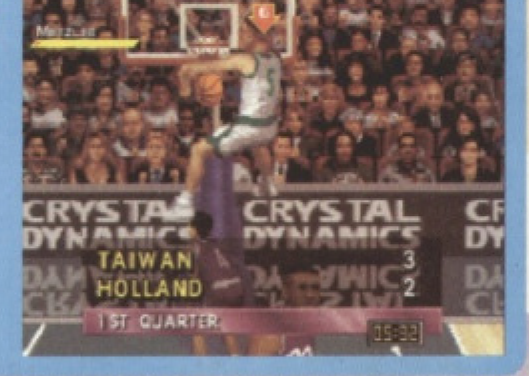




"Vic, I've fallen!"

HOOP DREAMS

Slam and Jam has gameplay elements of the arcade basketball games, like NBA Jam, and the more serious simulation types, like EA's NBA Live. There are enough button functions including stealing and isolating, for subtle play, but the game moves quickly and there's a 'Jam'-style dash bar, used for speed and fancy slam dunks.



The team's one man short – number 37's got a note from his mum.



THREE DIRTY DWARVES





THREE DIRTY DWARVES

BY	SEGA
GAME TYPE	BEAT 'EM UP
PRICE	TBA
RELEASE	AUGUST



1-4 PLAYERS

COMPLETE



What an interesting title for Segasoft's game which takes bits of Dungeons and Dragons, throws in some cartoon graphics, plays like Streets of Rage and then has a personality crisis every few levels.

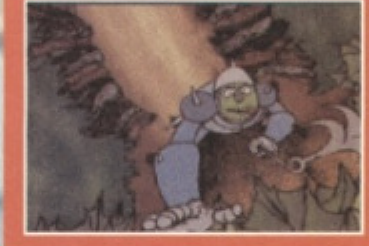
3DD takes the vertically-challenged orcs on a multi-level romp around 'Neau Yorkus', a twenty-level fantasy urban hell. The game should slip out within the next few weeks as a taster for some of Sega's big blockbusters later this autumn.

ZOOMSVILLE

Hardware trickery and special FX are definitely in the house. One level has you zooming in and out of the action controlling a demolition ball.





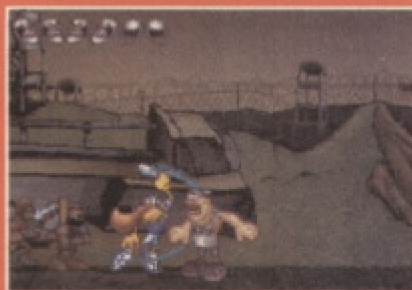




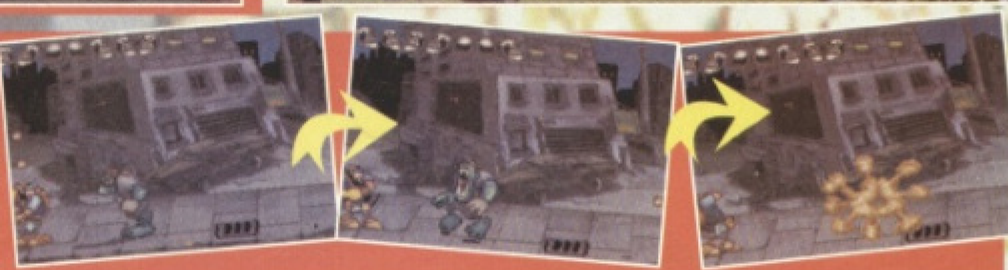


THREE INTO ONE

Three-way play is the order of the day if you have a multi-tap. 3DD allows each of the characters to be played by humans. If you are Johnny-no-mates, however, you play by switching between the three, each of whom have different powers...







Bit bonkers our elfin chums – the game features several bizarre sporting twists. American football and, here, baseball turn up on the menu.



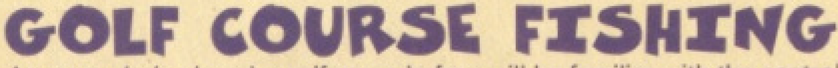




While it's stretching things rather to describe writing MEAN MACHINES as an art, there is a knack to game preview introductions. There are limited avenues for creativity – anecdote, satire and comparison are all fair game. One of the most reliable methods is to rely on the 'related real-life experience' approach.

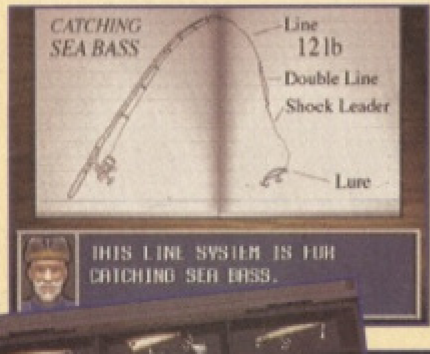
Never having been fishing for sea bass or dolphins off the coast of Japan, or ever having played anything similar to JVC's new game, I am therefore at something of a loss to know how to kick this one off. Sea Bass Fishing recreates the sights, sounds and, erm, thrills, of fishing in the fast lane. The game recreates the whole experience – from chatting with a bar tender about going fishing, to picking a captain, planning your route and even having a kip when you're tired. Oh, and you get to catch some fish as well if you're lucky.

Following your Captain's expert advice, you carefully select the right tackle, study your method, choose the best spot and then tease the little beauties into your net (that's the tricky bit). Then it's all back to the lodge keeper's kitchen for a fry up!



GOLF COURSE FISHING

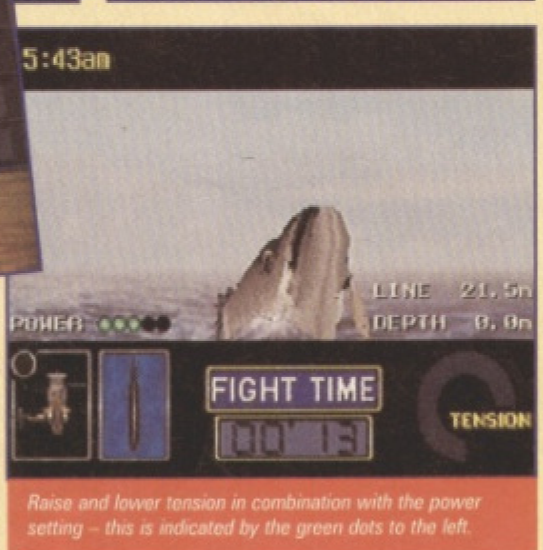
Anyone who's played a golf game before will be familiar with the control system of Sea Bass Fishing. The power bar appears when you're on the deck of your boat and you cast off in much the same way you would take a swing during a game of PGA. If and when you get a bite (and this mercifully shouldn't take as long as the real thing sometimes takes) then you must carefully reel the beastie in, keeping an eye on the power bar to make sure your line is taut enough, but not so taut it breaks.



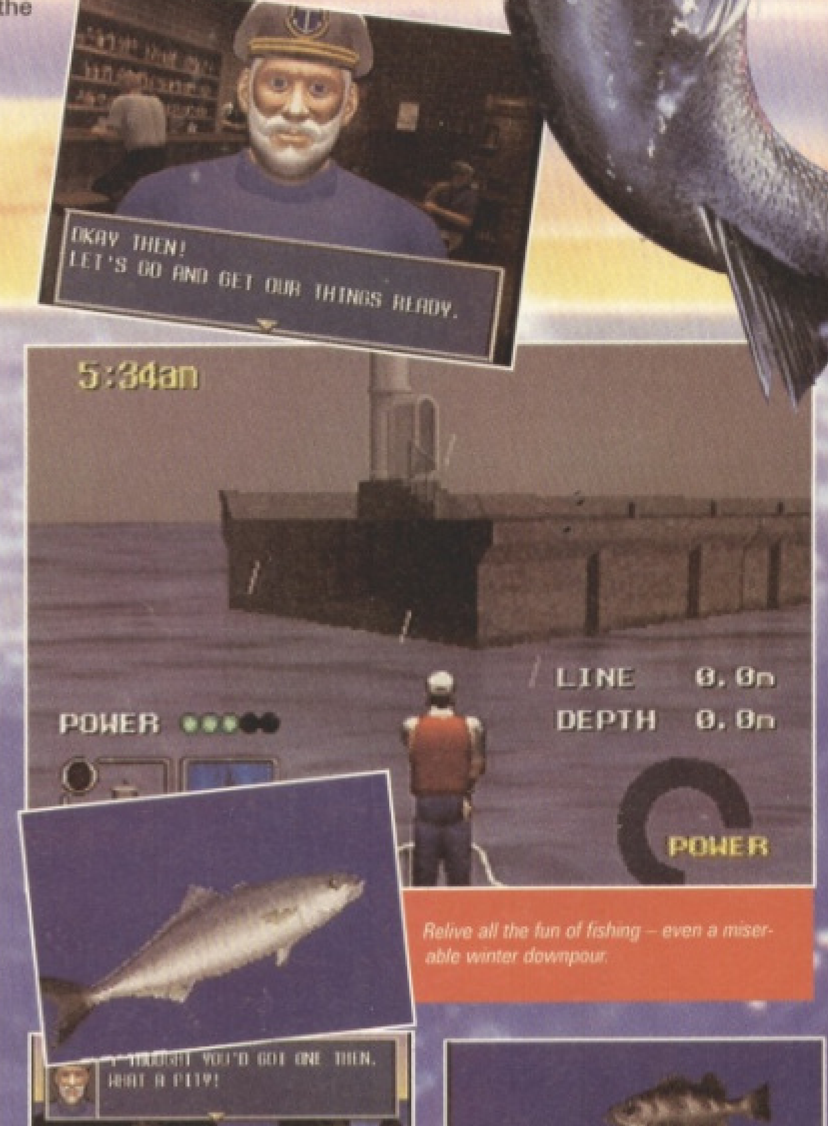




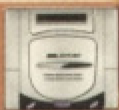
Always watch the tension bar – this line is stretched to the limit.



Raise and lower tension in combination with the power setting – this is indicated by the green dots to the left.



Relive all the fun of fishing – even a miserable winter downpour.



FISHING

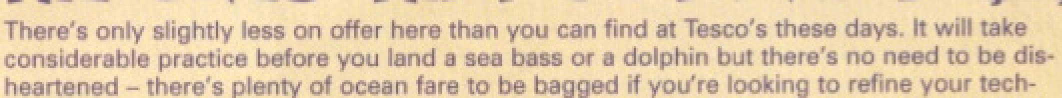




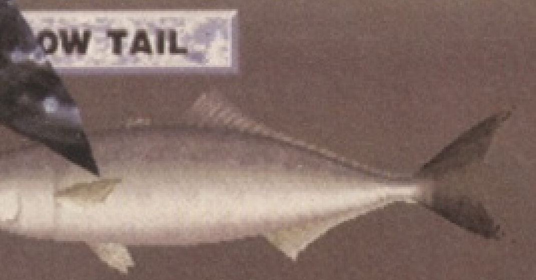
When I was at school my mate's parents used to live next door to the bloke who played Captain Bird's Eye. He had a massive house and a smart swimming pool.



THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

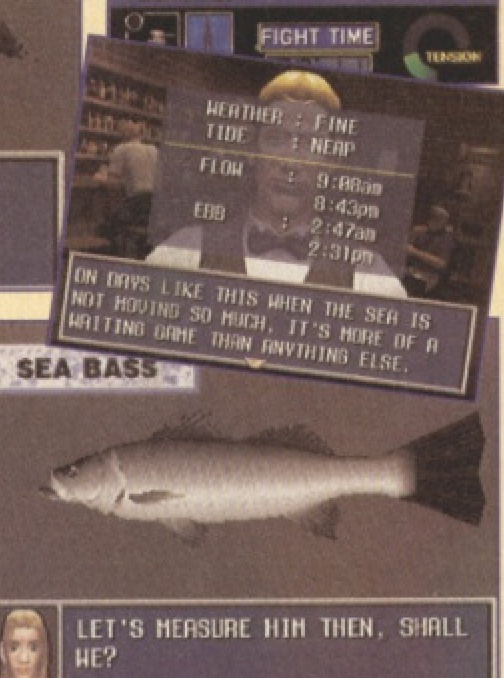


There's only slightly less on offer here than you can find at Tesco's these days. It will take considerable practice before you land a sea bass or a dolphin but there's no need to be disheartened – there's plenty of ocean fare to be bagged if you're looking to refine your technique. A word of warning – just before you set off you'll meet a seemingly friendly bloke in the bar who'll ask to come with you. If you agree, he'll plague your entire journey by mocking anything you reel in that isn't the size of a killer whale. Unfortunately, the game doesn't offer a 'throw annoying companion overboard' option.







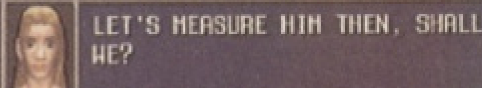








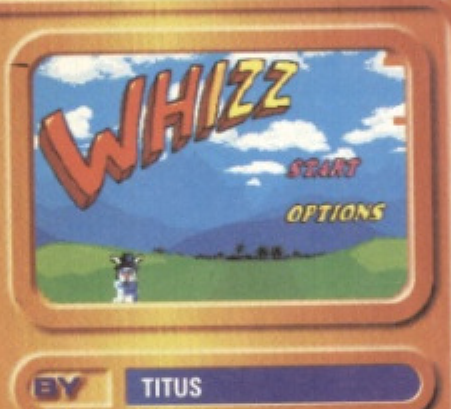
This is the snide git who offers you 'helpful' advice during your journey. Amazing how he looks like a black rock fish.



This skipper's a babe, and much more fun than Captain Bird's Eye. Only the very best passes her tape measure.







BY	TITUS
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM
RELEASE	AUGUST
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1
MEG	8
COMPLETE	



This neat little contender first got a taste of daylight some three years ago. Flair Software were developing it, Psygnosis were releasing it. It actually featured heavily in their release plans. But some things are never to be — Psygnosis jumped out of Megadrive games and Flair soldiered on putting Whizz together.

The development time can be excused when you see they've obviously wanted to get a lot out of the Megadrive: fast, isometric graphics without sacrificing gameplay. Whizz is a busy little beast, indulging in an ongoing balloon race against his arch-enemy. Who he? We no know.

It's irrelevent anyway, as Whizz's gameplay is more interesting than its plot. You career around a complex playfield, consisting of isometric islands linked by bridges. These are sealed off by various textured doors, which require you to possess cubic keys first.

The islands are chocka with enemies, which Whizz can spin into touch, leaving a health bonus or penalty. various other actions are open to Whizz; releasing rockets amongst them, but the main enemy is TIME! Whizz is played against the clock, and time is a very precious commodity. There are various islands, with different scenery and puzzles. Expect a review next month.

WE HAVE LIFT-OFF!



Whizz is an amateur rocket scientist Send these beauties into the strato-sphere.

SCORES FROM THE DOORS!

WHI



Lumme, mind the nefarious crab-sticks, Marlon!

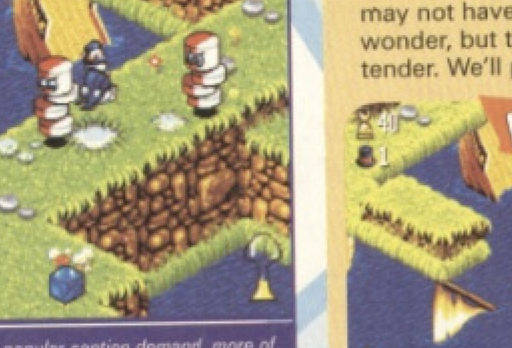
STARFISH CAPERS!

THE DOORS

Map out the cubes — you need each one to get through the doors. The doors get harder — from ice to wood, and then to iron. The harder keys will get you straight through softer doors.





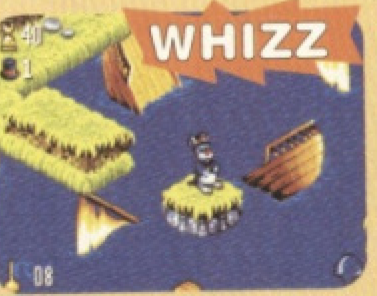


By popular caption demand, more of the nefarious crab-sticks.

TAKING ON SONIC?

Ironic, isn't it? We get all excited about Sonic 3-D, and then another one comes along the next month. Whizz, the underdog may not have the budget or names behind Sega's isometric wonder, but the magic rabbit's speed and polish makes it a contender. We'll put them head to head.

WHIZZ





INCREDIBLE MACHINES

Quick-thinking use of various contraptions is vital. Whizz sometimes has to push springs to unroll boingy bridges. In this sequence, a switch creates a crucial stairway.

Roll out the barrel, come along readers! We're sorted for Whizz!

Press yourself continuously against this colourful knob and continue having fun.

Whizz completes his conquest in a 'balloon' of sorts.

Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption

Get ready for the race of your life. probably.

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STEVE'S TIPS

With Euro '96 still fresh in our minds, there was an obvious choice for the coveted role of guest tipster this issue: Gazza. "Er, I canny beleeve it, man! Errrgghhh! [That was a Gazza burp, by the way] Ya gooin' doon tha' tubes man! Ee, it's alreet for soom peepal! Tsk! Maam, where's ma Goolash and spaghetti? Oooh, me blinkin' leegs goon ag'in. Waaaa!" Oh stop crying you pleb and get on with the tips. Someone give him back his dummy will you? Send your tips to WHO CARES IF GAZZA GOT DRUNK? IT WAS HIS BIRTHDAY AFTER ALL, TIPS BAR, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. Prizes are still on offer, if you're interested.





SATURN

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM

SCREEN MODE, FIGHT AKUMA

The Screen Mode cheat is performed in exactly the same way as in Vampire Hunter – hold L and R and keep pressing Up and then Down until it appears. This DOES work in the UK version, unlike the Juggernaut cheat. There is also a way to fight against Akuma, which goes like this. Play the game on whichever skill setting you want (easy or hard), and then win twelve straight rounds winning any six with a perfect finish, and any four with a super finish. You'll then have to fight Akuma before you fight Juggernaut.







MORTAL KOMBAT 2

CHEAT MODE

A contender for one of the worst games to have appeared on the Saturn, but that didn't stop some of you going out and buying it. So just for you lot, here's a cheat for a secret options menu. When the intro pictures start to pop up, press Down, Up, Left, Left, A, Right, Down, B, Y, C and then Start. The cheat mode will now be selectable.



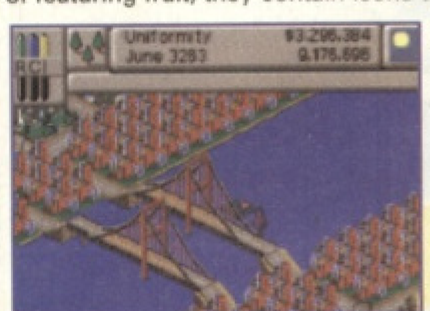


SIM CITY 2000

SECRET FRUIT MACHINE



Mr S Gamble of Great Yarmouth has very kindly sent in a rather nifty little cheat for all those budding city rulers out there. Are you ready for this? Build a marina and wait until you have two boats moored there. When you see one of the boats sailing around, move your cursor over it (when it becomes stationary) and press the right shift button.This will give you the info on the boat. Now press B button to get back to the marina and then straight away, repeatedly press the left shift button. If you are successful, three fruit machine reels appear, but instead of featuring fruit, they contain icons that are relevant to the game. Simply press C to stop each reel, and it costs $10 a go. He says that he hasn't managed to work out what all of the icons do when you do get three of a kind, but the 3 dollar signs give you an extra $100, and the 3 lightning bolts takes your power station back to 0 years old. Cool.



VAMPIRE HUNTER

AUTO COMBOS AND SCREEN MODE

More Vampire Hunter cheats to kick off this month's tips section, and a couple of snippets to help you through those teething problems you may have encountered. For an easy way to get three hit combos, set your character to Auto Blocking Mode, and when you are playing simply hit all three punch or kick buttons and you'll perform an instant 3 hit chain! Also, there is a hidden Screen Mode which lets you slightly alter the screen size. To access this go to the options screen, hold L and R and continually press Up and Down until the option appears.





GEX

CHEATS





This annoying but occasionally fun platformer allows you the option of skipping your way through the game with only the last boss, Rez, to beat. Be warned, however – you could complete the game within five minutes if you try this. Look away if you want some lastability. Go to the password screen and enter this code: CZYDRHYP. All of the levels will now be open, including Rezopolis. There are also some other cheats that can be accessed by pausing the game, holding down the R button whilst pressing any of the following button combinations:

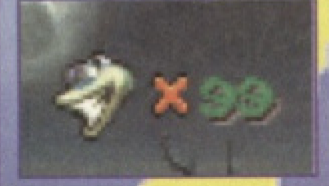
Down, Up, Start, Right, Right, Z, A, Start, Start, Right, Right.
Electric Shots

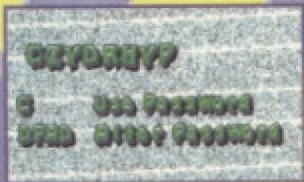
B, A, Down, A, Down, Down, Down, Up, Down, Right
Invincibile

Right, Y, Right, Down, Right, Right, B, Left, Up, Right.
Ice Shots

C, Up, Right, Right, Y, B, Up, Right, Up.
Fire Shots

Up, Up, Down, Right, A, Down.
Unlimited Lives







BLACK FIRE

CHEATS



Even though we have only just reviewed it this issue, we thought we'd be quick off the mark in providing the cheats. All of these are to be performed on the title screen.

To replenish fuel and energy, go to the title screen and press L, A, Z, Y, A, Down, Down. A sentence will indicate that it has worked. Now press Start and Start again during the game to stock up on everything.

To skip levels, press and hold C, B, A, Up, and L in that order. Now release A, then C, then L, then Up. A voice will sound as conformation. During the press and hold A, B, C, and Up and then press L to skip forward a stage.

Finally, for invincibility press and hold A, B and C and then release them in the order of C, B and A. Now press B, A, B and Y, and then hold X. Now press Up, press and hold Down, and release X. Another voice will tell you you've done it correctly.







JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE

INFINITE LIVES

To give you a never-ending stock of lives on this dire platformer, try entering the following password: taehc. Or try any of these passwords to take you to the other levels:

Level 2:	Walker3
Level 3:	Overtime
Level 4:	Villa
Level 5:	Endboss



NHL HOCKEY

POWER UP PLAYERS



To power your players up to the max, go to the player attributes screen and press A+B+C+X+Y+Z. Also there are some weird cheats to fiddle about with. At the start of a two player game when everybody is being shown to the crowd and all that, try X+Y+Z+L+R at the same time. Now when you hear the national anthem playing, hit any of the following buttons:



Big Players
L+R

Puck Floats to Centre A+X

Chunky Players
A+B

Upside-down PlayersA+Y+Z

Bouncy Puck
X+Y+R



MEGADRIVE

EARTHWORM JIM 2

TOP TIP

CHEATS

A bit of a follow on from the batch of codes we printed a few months back. Try out these for size. To enter each one you must pause the game and press these buttons:

Extra Life
A, B, C, C, C, A, A, B.

Extra Ammo
C, B, B, A, C, B, A, A.

Three Way Gun
C, C, C, C, A, A, A, C.

Extra Continue
A, A, C, C, B, A, Left, Left.

100% energy
A, B, C, A, B, C, A, A.

Warp to Lorenzo's Soil
A, A, C, C, B, B, A, A.

Warp to Puppy Love
Left, Right, B, B, C, Left, Right, A.

Warp to Inflated Head
B, B, C, A, B, C, Left, Right.

Warp to ISO 9000
A, B, C, Right, Right, Right, Right, Right.







WIN! The Ultimate Gaming Rig!!

OVER £12,000.00 IN PRIZES!

PANDEMONIUM INCORPORATED

You have the POWER. In this contest you don't rely on the luck-of-the draw. You determine if you win or not. You win by outscoring others in a game of skill. Can you solve the puzzle below? Then you have what it takes. It looks simple, but it's only the start. Each of five more puzzles gets a little harder. But this time it's all up to you. Stay in to the end with the highest score and the gear is yours. With whatever options you want. Do you have what it takes? Then play to win!

Computer Contest. Win a blazing fast computer with Pentium 200 Mhz processor, 16 meg. ram, 1.2 Gig. hard drive, CD-ROM, 17" monitor, modem and more!

Video Game Contest. Play on the hi-tech cutting edge with this line-up: Sony Playstation; Sega Saturn; Virtual Boy; 3DO; and Atari Jaguar. Get all five or trade the ones you don't want for CASH! Bonus options include: 33 inch monitor, £1,000 in games, cash, accessories and more!

Media Rig Contest. The Ultimate Gaming Environment, 40 inch monitor, 130 watt receiver w/ Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, and all components shown. Win Satellite Receiver as a BONUS OPTION! This rig will blow you away!!

We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at £2.00 each and one tie-breaker at £1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 55% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid

						MYSTERY WORD
	H					___
		E				___
P	I	N	C	H		W
	R					___
S						___

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCH .....W	PRESS.......K	BLAST ......A	WRECK .....D
BREAK ......Z	PUNCH .....S	SPRAY C	TURBO V
STOMP .....T	STAND ......R	PRESS ....E	DREAM ....O
CRUSH........I	SCORE .....H	SLANT L	CHASE......P

MYSTERY WORD CLUE:
WORLD RULERS HAVE IT AND IN THIS CONTEST YOU HAVE IT

Yes! ENTER ME TODAY, HERE'S MY ENTRY FEE:

- ☐ (£2.00) Computer Contest
- ☐ (£2.00) Video Game Contest
- ☐ (£2.00) Media Rig Contest
- ☐ (£3.00) SPECIAL! Enter them all (SAVE £3.00)

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PART 4

The end is near, my friends. A journey that can only be described as gargantuan has drawn to a close – and MEAN MACHINES is the only magazine hard enough to have brought you this far. The finishing tape is near, and the final battle in sight. Bring on the Dark Elf!

FINDING THE LIGHT LABYRINTH

Once the final orb is in your possession, head for the West Cape and walk into the black door to





reveal the Light Labyrinth. (The West Cape is above the Water Labyrinth, in case you get lost.)

LIGHT LABYRINTH

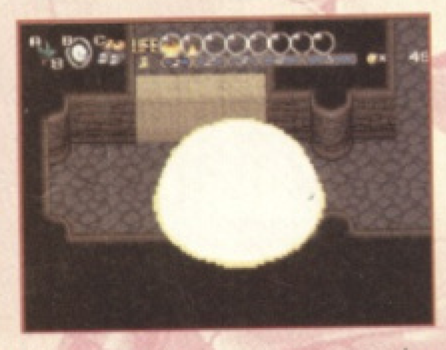
From the start, go right and across the crumbling platforms. Using the blast orb and the slide boots, jump over the gap to reach the blue key.



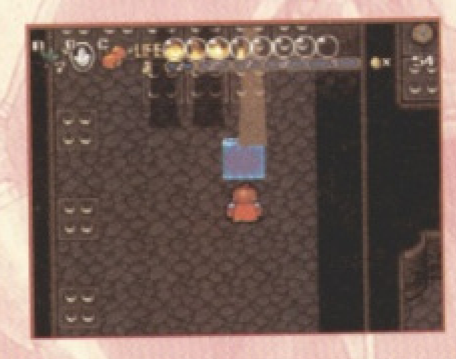
You have to fall down, but the only way out is back up. Now go up from the start (as that is where you emerge) and use the boots and blast orb as before to traverse the gaps. The eye door will now open. When you reach the three switches, equip the magical hands as well as the blast orb and use the multiple attack to press all of the switches and open the door.

Now go down the steps. In the conveyer belts and gnashers room, make your way to the bottom of the teeth, and onto the ice room. From here you should head to the bottom right, avoiding the holes in the floor. The chest in the smaller ice passage contains an Angel





Wing. Head through the door and up towards the dry patch in front of the stone tablet blocking your way. Keeping the blast orb equipped, add the heavy boots to it, and use them in front of the door to open it. This works for all of the similar stone tablet type doors.





Now go into the other door that was next to the one you emerged from. Coming out into another conveyer belt room, you should head upwards, using the slide boots/blast orb combination again to jump over the gaps. Ignore the first door you come to, and work your way down, and onto the chasm where there are lots of little platforms to jump over. In the bottom left corner is a life up globe. Now go back right to the chest, and from there head upwards, and down the vine. (Don't forget your monkey suit.) At the bottom, use the spark ball to get rid of the rings, and go down through the door at hit the switch. Now re-trace back to the chasm/gaps room, and make your way to the far left room. Get rid of the stone tablet door in exactly the same way as before, and then equip the freeze orb and magical hands to form a shield to render the lasers ineffective.

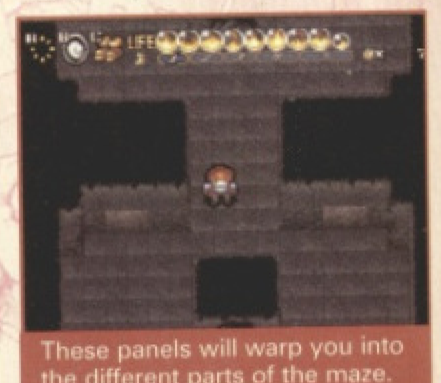
Now step on the icon on the floor to receive the Shining Sword!

BACK TO THE CASTLE

Take a trip back to see the King, to reveal the next part of the quest. Before you do, save the game in the church in the castle and have a night's kip at the inn to stock up all of your energy. Go and see the king and he'll tell you about all of the troubles and what not, and open up a secret passage to the next level and the Great Labyrinth. First though, head for the top left of the map when you emerge in the mound to reach the labyrinth.

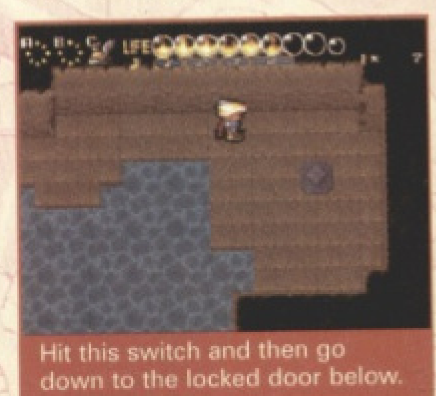
GREAT LABYRINTH

The object of this level is to find and defeat the four Djinns located in the maze who are trying to revive the giant. There are four of them located in and around the maze, and they require a lot of patience to find. You arrive in a room with another set of stairs to take you down to the final confrontation, and four lightning panels for you to slide into. The panel in the bottom left will take you to a Djinn, so ignore that for the moment, and head for the bottom right hand panel and slide into it.



These panels will warp you into the different parts of the maze.

When you emerge you'll be confronted with two passages – take the right hand one. Go down and touch the switch to make the panels appear, and then go through the door in the top right. Go up using the temporary tiles through to a Pegasus tile. Equip the hat and fly to the right, and go through the door. Now go up, left, and up again to another tile and this time fly to the left. Go up and then right, travelling along the water until you reach the switch.



Hit this switch and then go down to the locked door below.



(Sh)ining (Kin)gdom

style background. Firstly head left, then down and into a room with 3 possible exits. Take the bottom one for now and keep going down until you see a group of bombs in a room to your right. Use them to blow up the two cyclóps in the wall to make a passage to a switch. Touch it, and then quickly run down until you reach the bombs. Go left until you see the temporary platforms and then walk on them and go to the first right. The chest contains a red key.





Hit this switch, and quickly run down and over the new path.

Use the slide boots and the blast orb to get back across the gap you flew over. This time, fly off to the right at the split over the gap. Go through the door and fly over the water – you should just make the open door in the bottom right corner. Go through this door, and continue down to a small room with another switch. Hit this and run outside on to the temporary blocks that have appeared and head down. At the next available turning (which will be to the right as you look at it) go through to get the green key from the chest. Now you have to fall down as there is no other way up. You'll land in an icy section – from here you must



This key should be found early, to open up the rest of the maze.

head down. You should find a shallow pool of water leading into a deep section. Step in the shallow part and use the heavy boots and the freeze orb to freeze the water. Hit the switch at the end. Now go into the door that has just opened to the right of this switch and collect the blue key. Go up, left and down the stairs. Touch the switch when you emerge and go down to find yourself back at one of the Pegasus plates used previously. Now head back to the start and take the left hand passage previously ignored. Activate the Pegasus helm and head for the bottom right corner and hit the switch. Now go to the top left, and the door will now be open. Go through and up at every opportunity to reach the first Djinn.







Equip the blaze orb and the Shining sword to kill the boss.

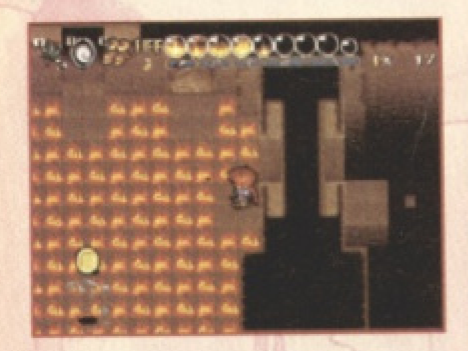
Whilst the baddie is flying about, you can still hit him with the blaze orb/shining sword combination. When he lands, hit him with the same thing and then run away as he spins like crazy. Keep at it like this and you'll defeat him. Now go back to the panel room and head for the the top left panel. Slide into it. You'll emerge in a fire

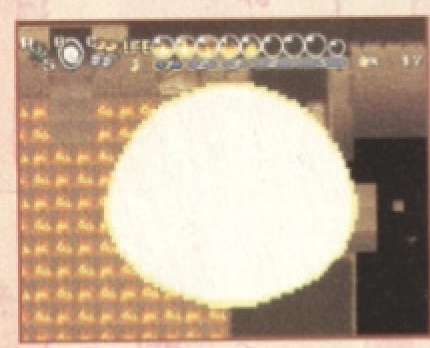
Use the slide boots and blast orb to jump over to the door above the



SHINING WISDOM

entrance to the chest (to prevent yourself from falling down).
Now go through the door and to the left. You'll emerge in a room full of flames with nowhere for you to move. This is where the heavy boots and the blast orb pairing becomes useful. They'll get rid of the flames and pave the way for you to go. Be warned, however – only use the magic on a solid piece of floor, otherwise you'll end up falling through. On this occasion however, you actually want to fall through.



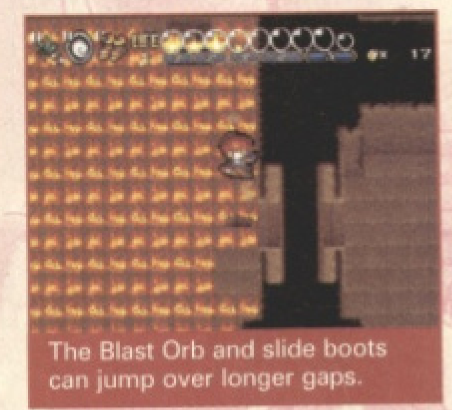




The blast orb will clear the way, but only use it on solid ground.

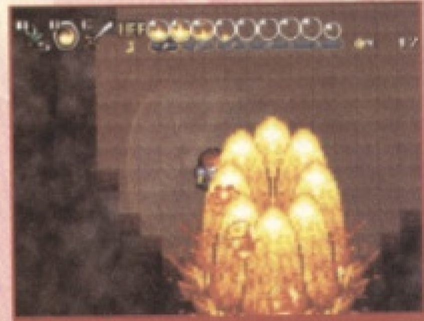
Go to the bottom right of the room, and take the first door on the right again to discover some more bombs and a cyclops. Blow that up to go through to a switch that you should touch to turn the sand to stone. Now go back up to the fire room you fell down from via the exit in the top right corner of the first room you landed in. Now make your way to the bottom left of the big fire room, and down the steps in the adjoining room. Again head for the bottom left when you're downstairs and you can now traverse the bridge as the sand should still be stone. The yellow key is the reward.
Go back up the stairs, and go to the room on your left. Now take the path that leads to the bottom of the next room, and blast your way past the flames to the exit in the top right. Hit the switch and go to the right, blasting more flames and making your way to the bottom right exit. Don't worry if the blocks disappear before you make it – you can use the blast orb and slide boots to jump the rest of the way. Go through the door to reach the next Djinn.





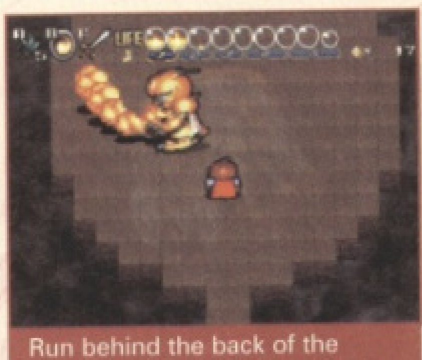
The Blast Orb and slide boots can jump over longer gaps.

Again, use the same tactic as before with the fire orb and the shining sword, but when the Djinn starts to spit out a trail of fire, run behind him to keep getting in hits before the fire has time to catch up with you.



The Djinns have the same magic capabilities as you.

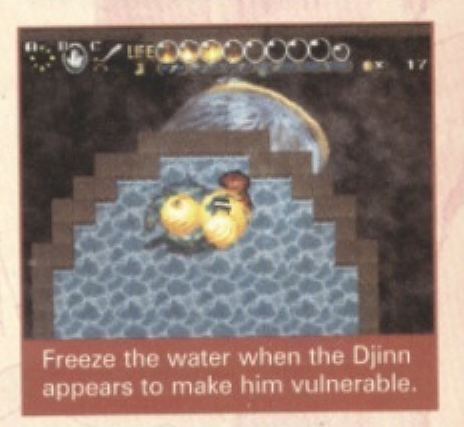
To save time, use an angel wing and go into the first panel on the left when you emerge and go on to face the Djinn. This fella is pretty tough. When he tunnels watch out for the bits of dirt as they cause damage. Whatever you do, don't get caught in any of his lightning attacks as they cause monumental amounts of damage. Wait until he is walking before attempting to attack. The final Djinn is located in the top right panel, and is of the water variety. To kill him, wait until he is coming through the surface of the water and then freeze it using the heavy boots and the freeze orb. He'll get stuck and you can let him have it. If that doesn't work, get behind him again (the backs are the weak spot for all of the Djinns) and avoid any of his attacks while laying into him. When he's dead, go back into the city and stock up on herbs, spend a night at the inn and save your game in preparation for the final battle.



Run behind the back of the Djinn when he uses this magic.

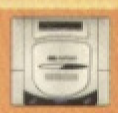






Freeze the water when the Djinn appears to make him vulnerable.





THE FINAL BATTLE

Once all four of the Djinns have been released, go down the other steps in the transporter room and you'll face Pazort. He has a couple of attacks – one is a freeze shot, which sends a trail of rising ice towards a part of the screen, and the other is like your blast orb/heavy boots stomp. The trick is to keep moving all the time, and get behind him as often as possible to get in hits while his attacks are aiming in another direction. This will reap the best results, and you'll have completed the game!





WAIT: THERE'S MORE!!

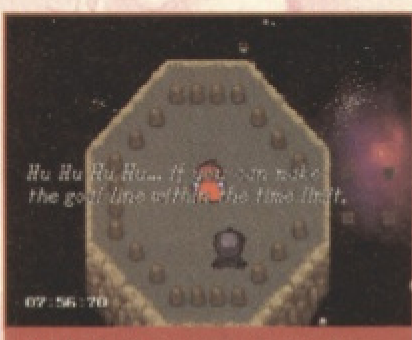
There are a couple of levels you may have noticed haven't been covered in the guide. This isn't because we missed them, it's because they aren't levels that have to be completed in order to complete the game. Here we go with the first of the secret levels that is found at the bottom of the treasury. Simply slide into the panel to reach a place similar to the Royal Crypt, but needing all of your special abilities. The second is located at the Thousand Year Tree – to access it you need to make the











Find all of the items in the time limit to gain better jump boots.

small sapling on the second floor of the tree grow, using the sap that the Hermit from the top of the tree gives you. It takes a while to grow, so be patient. The rewards from completing these two levels are more orbs (not the important ones) and powered up jump shoes. There is nothing too difficult about these levels, as they are similar to what has gone before.

UNCOVER HIDDEN SECTIONS!

When orbs and other items are collected, bushes, trees and cracks in the rocks can be utilised to greater effect. Take a look at these.

BLAST ORB

When this little beauty is in your hands, try equipping it and walking



into these leafy bushes. They explode, revealing the ladder to the passage below and a chest containing wonders! Look out for the Toydona car!



Just walk into these bushes when the orb is equipped.

BLAZE ORB

This works in the same way as the blast orb in that when you equip it, greenery will combust when you walk near it! The dark trees are the ones you should look out for here, as they'll prove very rewarding.





The tree goes up in smoke and the passage is revealed!

HEAVY BOOTS

By equipping these and running into little cracks and weaknesses in the walls and cliff faces around the outside playing area, more goodies are shown, especially the stranger shops in the continent.

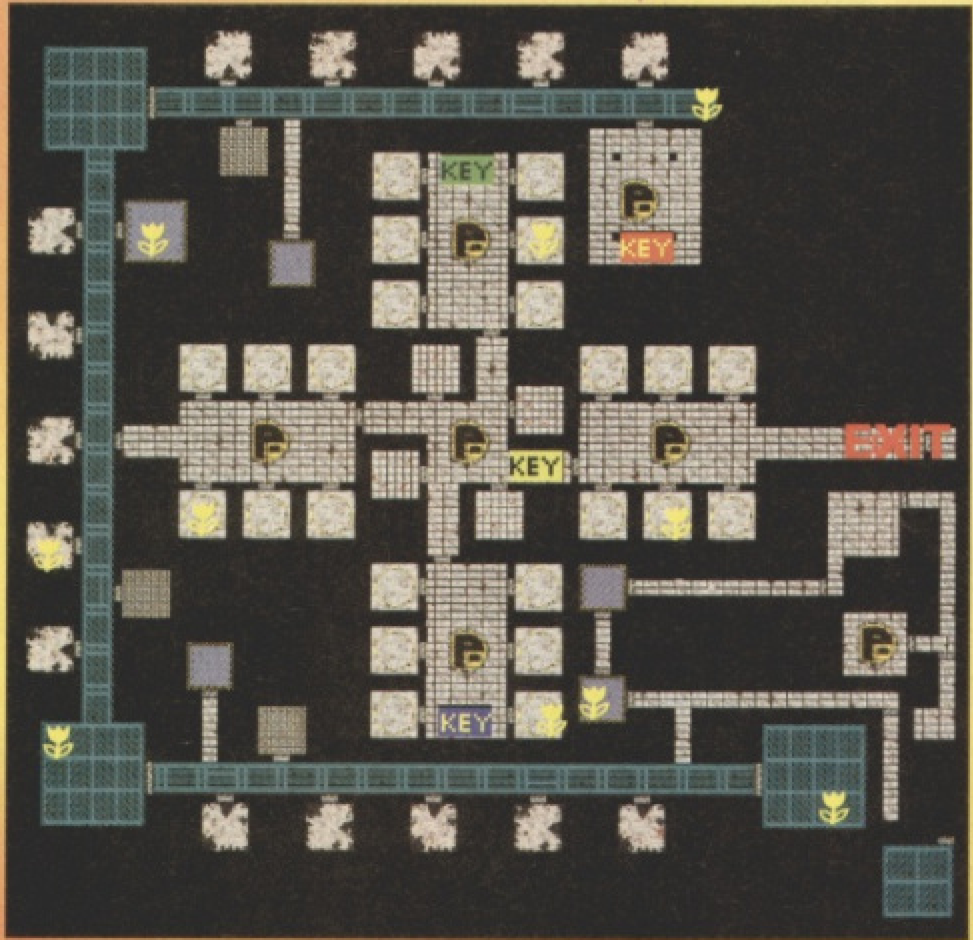


Well, was it worth the wait? Without doubt one of the greatest RPGs of all time has drawn to a close. Or has it? The statistic at the end contains a clue: Items Collected: 71%. Oh well, keep on playing until you find them all. Good luck!



Gremlin's first release was endorsed to the extent of a 93% score from the rabid Steve Key last month. Due to its vast, labyrinthine nature and sadistic structure, we thought it best to provide a cartographical guide. This is the first part.





OF GOOD CHARACTER

We recommend three of the characters as particularly worthwhile:

CAP'N HANDS
The Cap'n's twin guns are probably the most effective standard weapons. He spreads his fire in a wider radius than most others, and is great for steaming in and firing in circular patterns. His special attack takes out everything.

VOX
Once powered, her voice gun covers a wide area, and Vox's speed is an asset for impatient players.

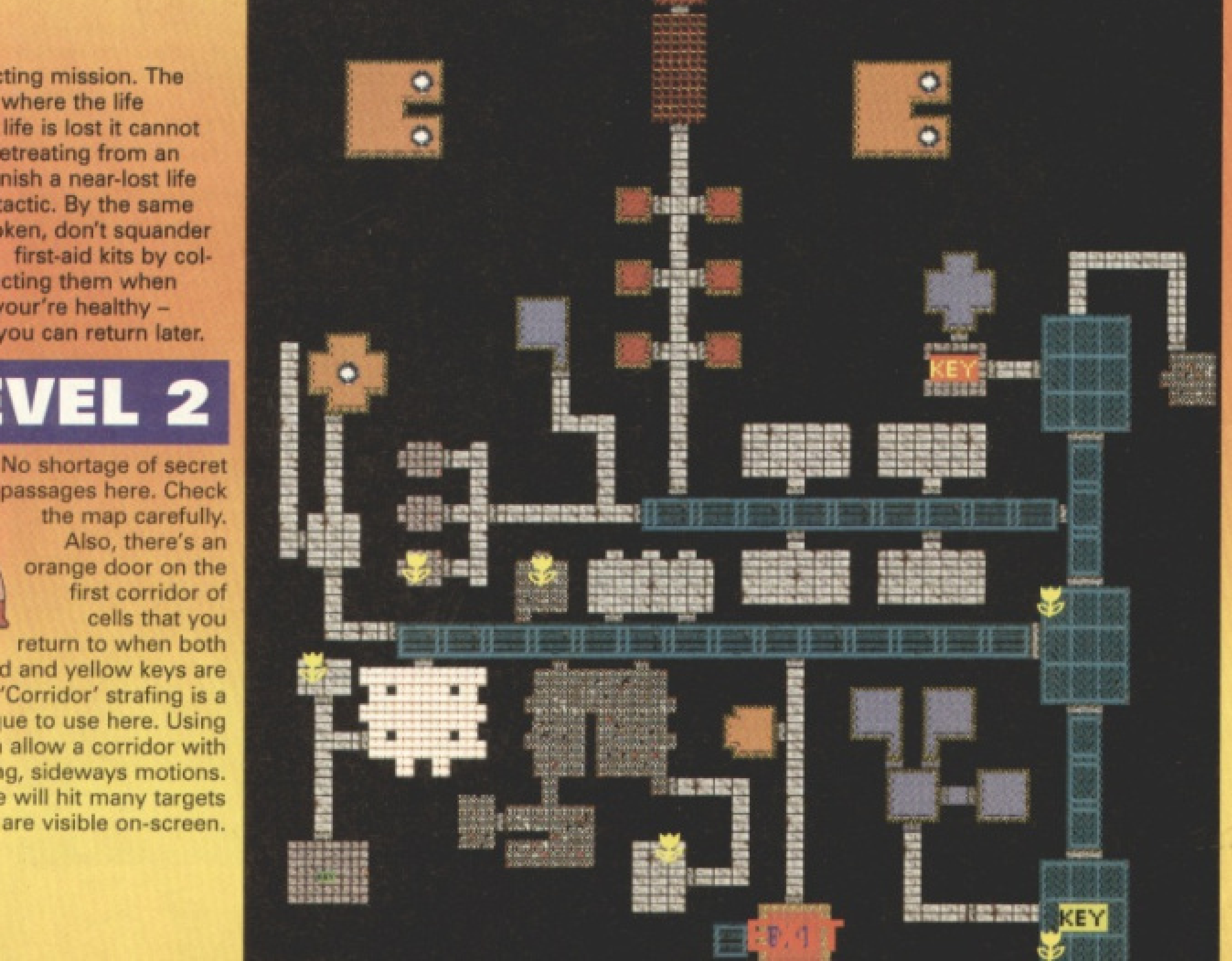
BOUNCA
When skilled in the art of strafing, Bounca's missiles are devastating, but their weakness is close-up, when it's easy to miss enemies out of their angle of fire.

LEVEL 1

Like many stages, this is a key-collecting mission. The secret of success is to know exactly where the life replenishers are. When a life is lost it cannot be regained, so retreating from an area to replenish a near-lost life is a good tactic. By the same token, don't squander first-aid kits by collecting them when your're healthy – you can return later.

LEVEL 2

No shortage of secret passages here. Check the map carefully. Also, there's an orange door on the first corridor of cells that you return to when both the red and yellow keys are collected. 'Corridor' strafing is a technique to use here. Using strafe, inch allow a corridor with oscillating, sideways motions. Your fire will hit many targets before they are visible on-screen.







LEVEL 3

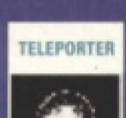
Rats plague this, and the next level. Don't try to aim at them – keep strafing and they'll cross your path. In any case, rats are more likely to panic you than cause serious damage, unless they attack in great numbers. Beware door arches, as zombies can collect there unseen.



MAP KEY



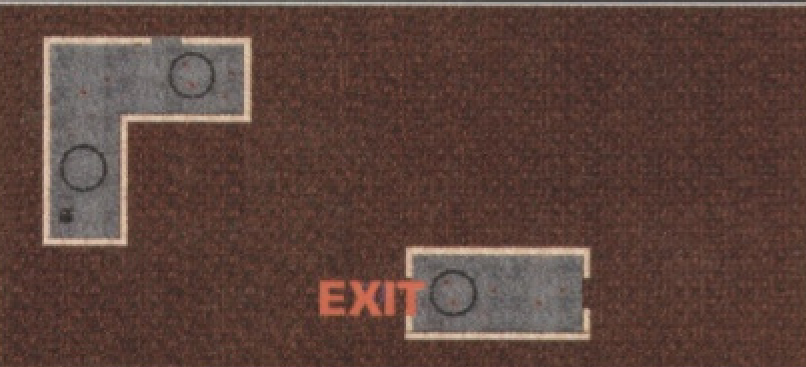




LEVEL 4

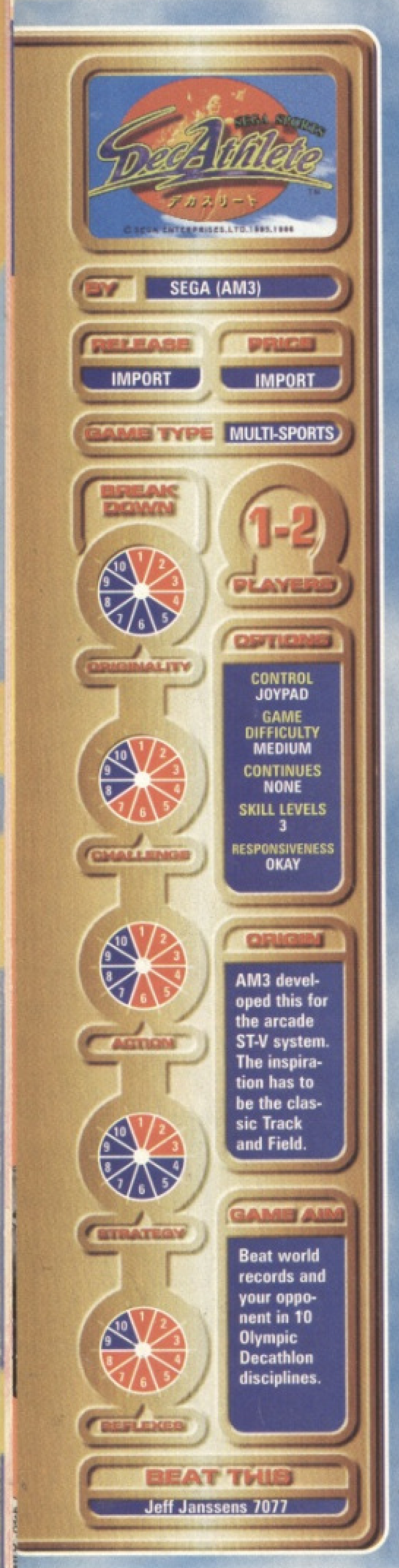
This huge level has a single transporter that requires all four keys. You'll discover certain principles about the zombie and rat population. Unlike other levels, where an area once cleared is clear, the denizens here reappear when you return to old areas. Worse, they congregate in plague numbers. The best tactic is to avoid returning to areas and use alternative routes on the way back from the key rooms if possible. There is also a rare extra life in one secret passage.



LEVEL 5

A boring and ugly level that is an interlude between the prison and badlands. There are few crates off the beaten track worth finding. The main threat is from guard dogs, which can penetrate the fences which block you. The 'boss' of sorts at the end succumbs to a few special weapons.

That's all the space we have for this month. These maps should see you through until our double-length



Summer is the season of sport, and inevitably the ultra-fit MEAN MACHINES team have been putting in some serious games practice in order to be selected for the Decathlete review squad. This is one of the games you do not buy for an arthritic Granny, or anyone in your family with a claw, because you require a Saturn and fingers to get the most out of it. Do you have those ready? Then we'll proceed.

Decathlete is a creation of AM3, and with an eye on the forthcoming Olympics they've gone for an arcade-friendly, photogenic, loopy 'lympics approach with comic characters and simple controls.







Aleksei has not lost his contact lens in this shot. He's just tossed the javelin, but fouled it by stepping over the line. The replay shows the moment in amazing detail.

You catch Aleksei here on an off day. He prepares for the throw, spins, then overbalances. Buy the game and see him eat dirt.



The warm-up for the first event is brilliant. This is the point where an announcer introduces the characters. They perform limbering exercises!








There are loads of signs of Decathlete's arcade character. AM3 have chosen to approach character selection almost in the same style as Virtua Fighter 2 by their colleagues, AM2. Are there any fighters hidden here?





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SEARCH FOR THE HERO

Normally sports game sprites are anonymous types of individuals with only names to properly distinguish them. Decathlete is at the other end of the scale, with ten humourously defined characters with their own outfits and animations. They also major in one or other of the discipline types; throwing, jumping or running. Succeed with them and you are treated to a flamboyant display, fail and they're just as voluble. Take a look at these (M)People;



RICK BLADE (USA)
The all-American, all-round hero.



JEF JANSENS (GBR)
British beef – and him and his hairdo are completely bonkers!



ALEKSEI RIGEL (RUS)
The Russian bear, with a natty line is skin-tight one-pieces.



JOE KUDOU (JAP)
The Japanese always have to be the cool young men, don't



FEMI KADIENA (JAM)
The bogling boody with the stunning body. She's a champion jumper.



ELLEN REGGIANI (FRA)
She's French, with an Italian surname and a Yank accent!



LI HUANG (CHI)
Streetfighter's Chun Li obviously decided to undergo a career and name change.



KARL VAIN (GER)
Deutschland's girl-haired, arrogant, long-limbed fop.

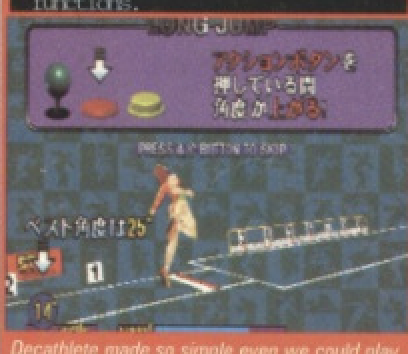






BUTTON LOON

Decathlete has you bashing your joypad buttons. Two of these are running buttons used to build speed in most events. The third is an 'action' button, used for most other functions.



Decathlete made so simple even we could play the Japanese version.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Multi-sports games aren't really my cup of tea but, like Track and Field, Decathlete won me over on the quality of its graphics as much as anything else. The figures are outrageous caricatures, each with their own personality and curious habits and exressions. Their interaction with the very solid backgrounds is impressive from whatever angle you view from, even if the replays are sometimes lacking. Where this really scores over Track and Field is in its ease of use. Getting impressive speed and power levels up is possible without breaking your fingers, or the joypad. Whether either are much good for anything else afterwards is another matter...

COMMENT



GUS

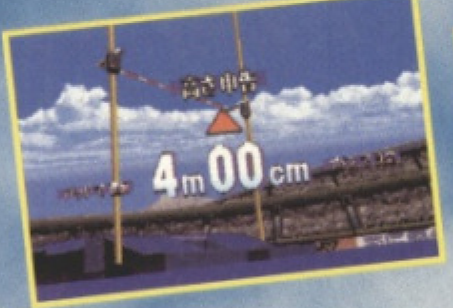
We've been envying Konami's Track and Field on Playstation for some months, and now Sega come along with a game that looks better! Decathlete figures are fantastic — as detailed as any game characters ever seen. AM3 have chosen to add humour to the game, as the characters are pretty off the wall — particularly Britain's own Jeff Jansens. The game is a little more laid back, with no particularly rigorous events or complex controls. More than two-player competition would have been nice, but how many houses have four pads anyway? Decathlete works well as an arcade conversion on Saturn, revitalising an old but popular formula with some amazing graphics.

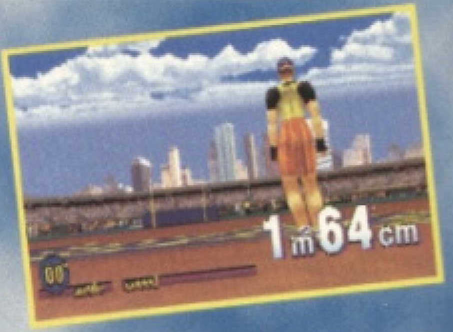
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ONE DAY EVENTER

The game simply replicates the 10 events of the Olympic Decathlon (an event we Brits have a proud history in due to Daley Thompson and others). Any event can be played in isolation in practice mode, or taken in Decathlon sequence. There is no qualifying requirement.







100 METRES DASH



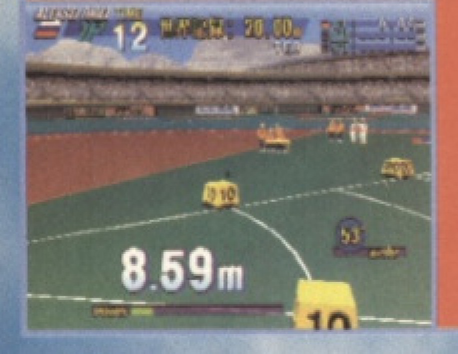
Straight race to the end of the track. The 100 metres uses two joypad buttons to pummel your way to the line. Speed continues to build all the way to the finish. The action button makes the character lean for the line.

SHOT PUT





Hellishly based on timing. A bar shows rhythmic 'spurts' of the energy. Pressing the run buttons quickens the pace, but the action button has to be pressed at the height of the spurt. Hold it while the angle gauge descends from 80 degrees to about 45.

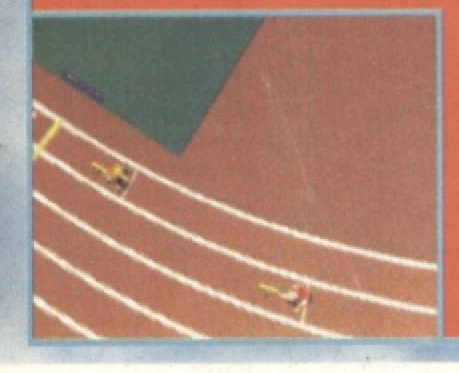




400 METRES



Running, with the added element of strategy. Each character has limited stamina, so relentless button-bashing will tire them well before the line. Go easy and pounce in the home straight.





LONG JUMP

Button bashing takes you up to the line, then the action button is held while a gauge shows an increasing angle, from 0 to 90 degrees. The ideal time to release the action is around 45 degrees. The run buttons should then be pressed to stabilise the player during the jump for added distance.





HIGH JUMP



Use run to build up speed to the bar, select an angle like Long Jump, then release, using up on the pad at the last moment to flip legs over the bar.





110 METRES HURDLES

Running with the added complication of jumping 10 hurdles laid out on the course. Timing these to maintain maximum speed and smallest jumps is the key.









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DISCUS



Difficult. The player uses the pad to rotate the character through a single gyration, then uses action to select a throwing angle as the athlete's arm strobes. It's easy to miss the measuring zone.

DECATHLETE'S COMING!

Our review of Decathlete is of the Japanese version just before its arcade release. Sega Europe have snapped up the UK version for September, and want to stress it will be optimised full screen/full speed. If there are any other improvements, like more players, we'll inform you and alter our review

JAVELIN

Potentially graceful. More run-up, then action to bring the angle gauge down from 60 degrees, but the athlete's forward momentum may cause him to cross the line and foul, so timing is vital.





POLE VAULT

Not as tricky as first appears. Get a good run-up, plant the pole with the action button, and hold it to get optimum power. Release and press action again to vault the bar when fully extended.





1500 METRES

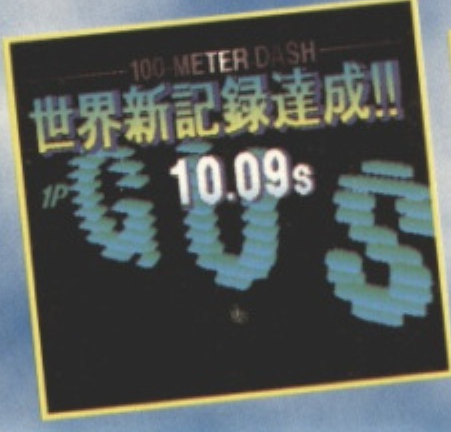
A mental event. More stamina running, but with the added complications of computer athletes. You can weave in and out of these, and regain stamina by coasting for a bit.

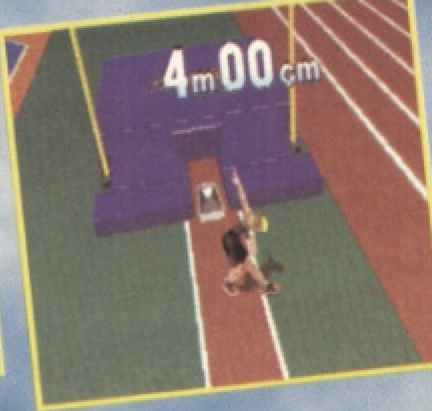




PHYSICAL PEAKS

Decathlete's most striking feature is its character animation. These beautiful polygon figures are as detailed as Virtua Fighter 2 characters and their animation is even better. Watch their reactions close-up to every triumph





GRAPHICS 93

▲ Incredible characters, with hundreds of smoothly blended polygons and daunting physiques. The stadium also looks stunning.

ANIMATION 93

▲ Brilliant range of event animation, and little set-pieces by the characters.
▼ Their running postures take a bit of getting used to!

MUSIC 72



▼ Little cheesy snippets, but nothing of any real note.

EFFECTS 76



▲ A palpable crowd atmosphere, and little sounds of personal exertion.
▼ Sadly, no commentary.

PLAYABILITY 89

▲ Very easy to pick up and play, with some events giving the opportunity to test your skills.
▼ Only two participating players at a time is a bummer.

LASTABILITY 84

▲ Decathlete diligently records your characters' efforts with scores and dates.
▼ Few options to mess with.

OVERALL

A mini-Olympics in your living room: and they look better than the real thing!



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GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN



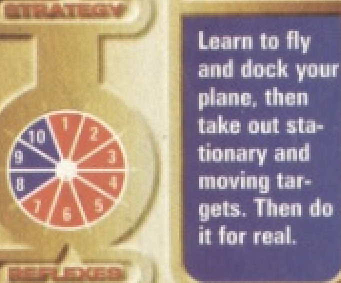
ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL JOYPAD
GAME DIFFICULTY TOUGH
CONTINUES SAVE GAME
SKILL LEVELS 1
RESPONSIVENESS OK

ORIGIN

A fairly traditional 3DO blaster dusted down by Krisalis, who converted Magic Carpet for Saturn.

GAME AIM

Learn to fly and dock your plane, then take out stationary and moving targets. Then do it for real.

BEAT THIS

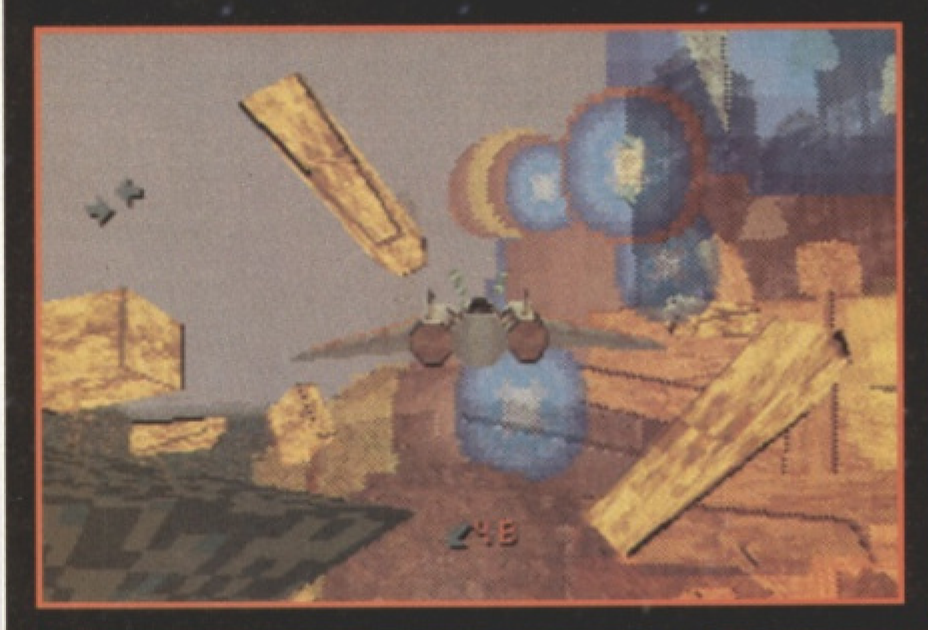
Complete Mission 10.

The year is 3037 (which makes the title a bit confusing for starters.) and the Fednet are running things on planet Earth. Muggins (that's you) has been coerced into 'volunteering' for a tour of duty in the Fednet Space Corps. But not any old pilot has got the right stuff to fly a Predator Mark IV planetary assault vehicle. You need to be experienced, skilful, ruthless and precise. And pretty daft.

The outermost planets aren't a good place to be – they're crawling with anti-FedNet rebels armed with fighter squadrons and very big land guns. You'll need to take out their radar defence installations (these huge dishes are usually heavily guarded by mushroom-like guns that fire ground-to-air lasers), command buildings (which you'll easily recognise if you've ever seen an episode of Stingray), fighter planes and James Bond-style laser satellites. Keep an eye on the position of your mother ship and enemy forces by flicking on to the tactical map which displays your position on each mission's 'operational arena'. Smoke me a kipper I'll be back for breakfast.



A demonstration of 'terraforming' using your twin laser cannons.





You'll get away with initial collisions by simply rebounding off the obstacle. Push your luck, however, and you'll come a serious cropper.



IN ARMS WAY

Of all the weapons your Predator Mark IV comes armed with, you'll find yourself relying on four principal systems. Beam lasers can be upgraded to awesome strength, and can also terraform land if directed at the ground. It is often simpler to destroy defence installations by shooting the ground away from beneath them than by shooting the actual buildings. Your initial armament of ten ATG (air-to-ground) missiles are unstoppable against stationary targets when used with the pulsing targeting system that outlines your quarry in a bright blue box. Your initial supply of ten ATA (air-to-air) missiles work in a similar way. If you're in serious trouble then reach for your ECM (electronic counter-measure). This works like a smart bomb, destroying incoming homing missiles. Be careful, however – you only start the game with three. Further devastating fire-power, like Multi-missiles and Mega Lasers really have to be earned.



Keep your eye on the fruit machine style collection of floating power-ups that collect in the bottom right corner of the screen. If you hit upon a magic combination you'll earn an instant upgrade for your ship.











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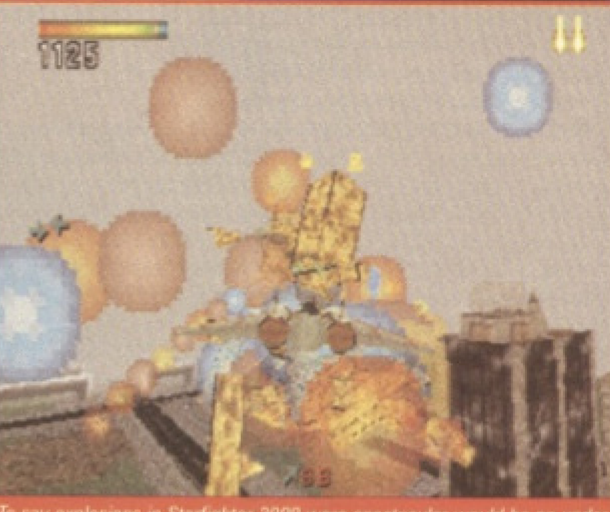
StarFighter 3000











To say explosions in Starfighter 3000 were spectacular would be an understatement. The bigger the building, the more bonkers the prang.



POWER MAD

Shooting enemy craft and installations leaves multi-coloured objects floating around for a short while after the ensuing explosion. Destruction can reveal giant red diamonds, green stars, yellow pyramids and so on. Fly into these if you're quick enough – they'll start to collect fruit-machine style at he bottom right of your screen. Collecting descending parachutes (check the map for their location after you've been notified on screen) also rewards you with energy crystals. Your on-screen inventory holds four crystals at a time and fills from left to right – when you get a suitable combination of crystals you'll hit jackpot with engine or weapon upgrades to your ship.



e you buy it.

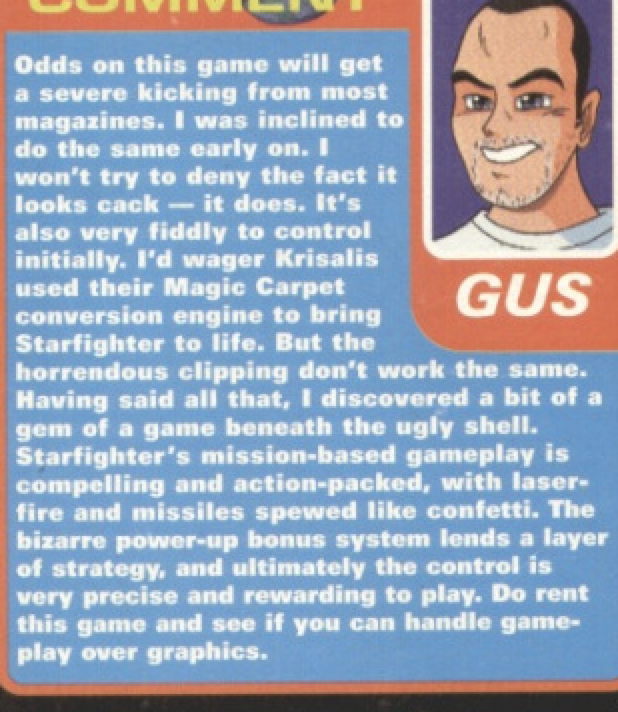
t £3.49 for three evenings







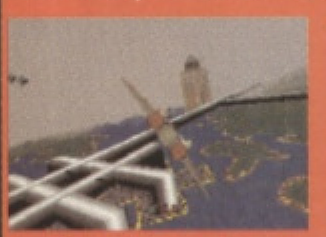




Your on-board targeting system outlines potential hits in a bright blue wire-frame box. When one of these appears in front of you, launch a missile. I think we're probably just about close enough here.

BARNEY RUBBLE

Your many missions — obliterate the following!



PIPELINES Very easy to destroy — they go up like firelighters.



TOWER BLOCKS The inner city groove. Bring 'em down.



POWER PLANTS It's Globarama. Just take it out.



STRATOLINERS Majestic mother of all aircraft. Takes a severe beating.



BASES Often heavily defended, but ripe for punishment.

COMMENT



GUS

Odds on this game will get a severe kicking from most magazines. I was inclined to do the same early on. I won't try to deny the fact it looks cack — it does. It's also very fiddly to control initially. I'd wager Krisalis used their Magic Carpet conversion engine to bring Starfighter to life. But the horrendous clipping don't work the same. Having said all that, I discovered a bit of a gem of a game beneath the ugly shell. Starfighter's mission-based gameplay is compelling and action-packed, with laser-fire and missiles spewed like confetti. The bizarre power-up bonus system lends a layer of strategy, and ultimately the control is very precise and rewarding to play. Do rent this game and see if you can handle game-play over graphics.

COMMENT

MARCUS

OK, I know this doesn't look great. I know the controls take some getting used to. And I know you always seem to be flying around on a really foggy day. But fiddly configurations and pea soupers aside, if you give this a chance you'll be rewarded with a very addictive game that plays much better than it looks. Krisalis clearly didn't attempt to simulate explosions and terrain as closely as they could have – what they've given us instead are bizarre abstracts that turn the ground into patchwork quilts that you can furrow with your lasers. Buildings don't just explode – they erupt into kaleidoscopic fireworks that spew out floating power-ups of different shapes and colours. Once you get used to all this and play into the game, you realise that StarFighter 3000's appeal goes deeper than its strange appearance. Give it a go.

GRAPHICS 73

▲ There are some bonkers explosions and bizarre terrain effects.

▼ It's all a bit blocky and drab. This really lets the game down.

ANIMATION 70

▲ The quality of the animation doesn't seem to matter after a while.

▼ It's still not great.

MUSIC 77

▲ The music tracks include Obie 1-Thirty, Death By Stereo and Planet Ma. The ambient stuff's our favourite.

EFFECTS 83

▲ Excellent jet noises (even in space!), power-up chimes and War of the Worlds-style scream effects.

PLAYABILITY 79

▲ This has proved to be more addictive than we originally suspected.

▼ You may need to reconfigure the controls.

LASTABILITY 80

▲ There are sixty missions, subdivided into blocks of fifteen.

▼ Many of them are a bit samey.

OVERALL

Unlike its graphics, this is neither ropey nor strange. It's not groundbreaking either, but it is well worth a look.

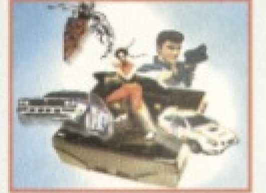


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SATURN RELEASE LIST

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PROVISIONAL RELEASE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING RELEASES. PLEASE REMEMBER THESE ARE INTENDED AS A GUIDE ONLY AND WE CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CHANGES OR DELAYS.

Alien Trilogy	October
Baku Baku Animal	End July
Criticom	Early July
Dawn of Darkness	21st June
Deadly Skies	September
Destruction Derby	August
Doom	September
Fade to Black	August
Ghen War	August
Hexen	August
Legend of Thor	Early July
Loaded	July
Mortal Kombat 3	Mid July
Need for Speed	5th July
Nights into Dreams	August
Offensive	19th July
Olympic Games	End July
Road Rash	12th July
Shockwave Assault	5th July
Slam n Jam '96	Early July
Spycraft	August
Swagman	September
Tomb Raider	September
Tunnel B1	26th July
Viper	26th July
Waterworld	19th July

SATURN GAMES

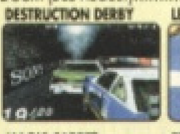

D


ALONE IN THE DARK

GEX

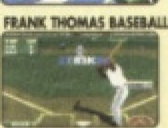

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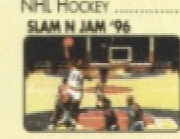

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X MEN

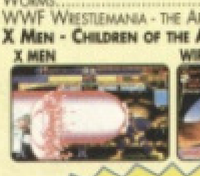
WIPEOUT

SATURN TOP TEN

1. EURO '96
2. GUARDIAN HEROES
3. X MEN
4. PANZER DRAGOON 2
5. STREETFIGHTER ALPHA
6. WIPEOUT
7. VIRTUA COP & GUN
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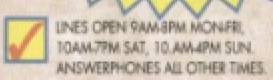
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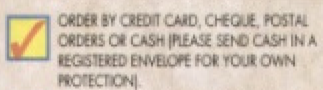
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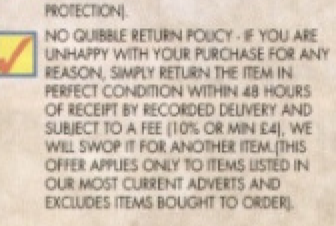
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ME5(8)





BY US GOLD

RELEASE AUGUST

PRICE £44.99

GAME TYPE FOOTBALL

BREAK DOWN

1-2 PLAYERS



ORIGINALITY

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
EXCELLENT

CHALLENGE



ORIGIN

Designed by US Gold's Silicon Dreams developers, and licensed to the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games.

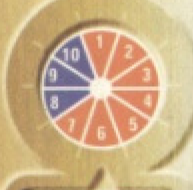
ACTION



GAME AIM

To be frank, this is football.

STRATEGY



REFLEXES

BEAT THIS

Scotland vs England, 3-0.

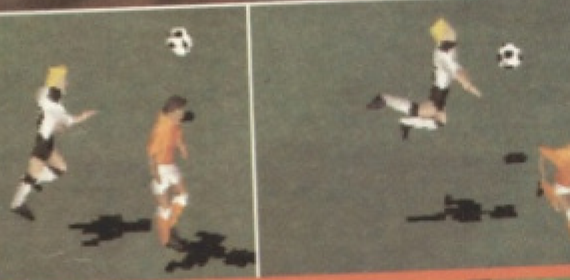
OLYMPIC SOCCER

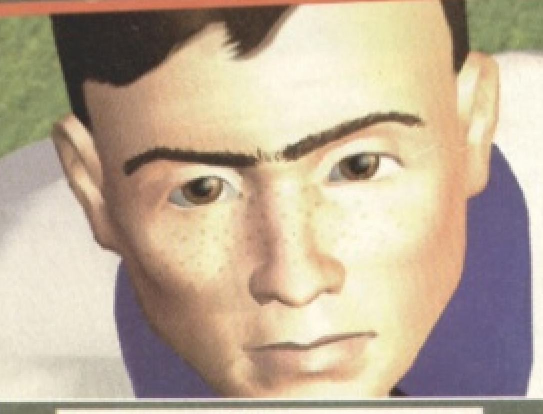
There have always been two camps when it comes to soccer games — a bit like 'European' and 'latin' styles. The 'latin' types are your Fifas and your Euro '96s — all graphical flair, texture maps and fancy camera angles. Unarguably good simulations but, well, lacking a bit of verve. Many passed over Fifa on the Megadrive for the altogether more dynamic Sensible Soccer.
Now there's a distinctly European alternative for the Saturn. Olympic Soccer comes from Silicon Dreams, who created last year's hit Fever Pitch for US Gold. That was about as close as you can get to mixing Match of the Day with a Chuck Norris movie. The fundamentals of Fever — fast, arcade movement and bullet shots on goal form the basis of Olympic Soccer. The violence has been left out, but somehow the spirit of Sensible's old classic has crept in. If you thought the Saturn needed another soccer game like England needed a 1-1 draw with Switzerland, we're here to prove you otherwise.

MIS-SHAPES

Olympic has a very polygonised look which doesn't, being strictly honest, look as initially appealing as Euro '96. The reasons for this are well founded. It allows the perspective to move incredibly smoothly in realtime, and for the players to react realistically in three-dimensions. Despite the lack of character detail, the animation is cool, even down to players raising their hands to signify they want a throw-in or goal kick.





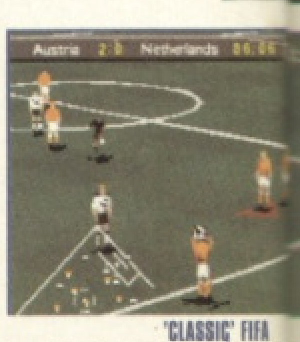




SENSIBLE VIEWING

The wide range of view perspectives are all designed to be playable rather than cosmetic. There are four orientations and five levels of zoom. Mix and match these to create layouts like:


DEFAULT VIEW

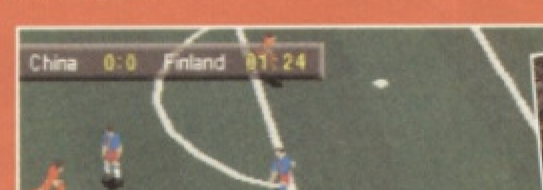

'CLASSIC' FIFA



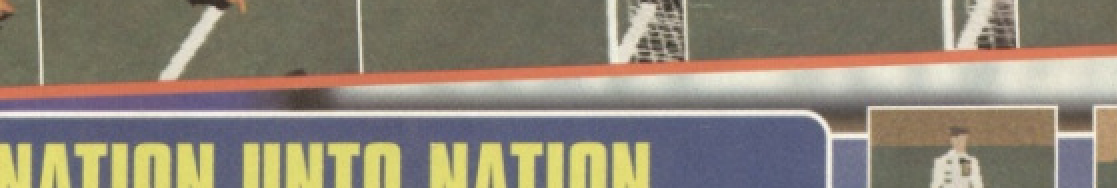


TAPEHEAD

Olympic Soccer has replays. Big deal. However, these square up to the facilities on any other football games. The record time is reasonable, and you have freedom to take any angle and zoom, even during replay.



SOCCER



NATION UNTO NATION

The backing for this game is, naturally, the Olympics. So, an Olympic competition you will partake of. All teams are national sides (not 'the' national sides) and there's the range of ability from Saudi Arabia to Brazil, and even beyond to Scotland. In Olympic Soccer the sides do exhibit something approaching characteristics, with exuberant Italians and clinical Germans. There's also an arcade option, which sets up single games against progressively better opposition.









FIFA

'CLASSIC' SENSIBLE



'CLASSIC' STRIKER



CLOSE IN



OUR FAVOURITE



GREEN'S GAB

We can't display the commentary, so you'll have to trust us on this one. Alan Green of Radio 5 has done the honours, and his soft Scots tones compare very favourably with John Motson (Fifa '96) and Barry Davies (Euro '96). Game commentary is always liable to a few glitches like rapid changes of tone, and Olympic suffers from these in small measure. But on balance, the breadth of commentary and implementation is the best of any Saturn soccer game.



GUS

The worst-looking but best-playing football game. Simple. Attempting to do less and achieving more than Euro '96, at least in the graphics department. You have to test the game to appreciate the feeling of almost total control you have with the player. The game is a true descendent of Sensible Soccer with its easy passing, but there's much more strategy and depth to it than this suggests. Chesting, one-two play, variable headers — as much as any other game, and matched with any excellent sense of pace. Best of all, in my view, is the feeling that you can get close enough to score. Too many games deprive you of the ball in early midfield. Olympic lets you get into dramatic scoring positions, and compensates with more frequent spectacular near-misses. This is the football game for gamers who like to see the ball rocket into the net. This is the football game Saturn owners have been waiting for.



MARCUS

I know we raved about it at the time, but Fifa 96 is starting to look a bit raggedy now. Euro 96 was a definite progression, and Olympic Soccer takes things further still. The graphics are admittedly a bit alarming at first - the players are angular and relatively basic-looking while the stadiums (what you see of them) have clearly had less attention lavished on them than in other titles. But if it's a logically responding, smooth running game of football you're after then this garnish shouldn't bother you as much as the gameplay. And this is where Olympic Soccer wins out. The players' movements are more detailed and their skills more comprehensive than in either Fifa or Euro, while the commentary puts Motty's narrow Fifa performance to shame. Give Olympic Soccer a chance and it'll win you over too.



MEGA GAME

GRAPHICS



▲ Football viewed from the perspective of what's best for the player.

▼ A minimalist approach to player and stadium design.

ANIMATION



▲ The tiny figures move very neatly, and the ball movement is brilliant — really makes the game.

MUSIC 83

▲ From Silicon Dreams' hand-bag techno dept.

EFFECTS 87

▲ The commentary is good, bar a few oddities.

▼ The crowd require a little more enthusiasm.

PLAYABILITY



▲ Too good to be true — speed and player skill almost perfectly matched. Games are exciting to watch and play.

LASTABILITY 91

▲ Loads of teams of genuinely varied ability. But it's multi-play that sustains football games.

▼ The lack of 'real' tournaments is a bit frustrating.

OVERALL

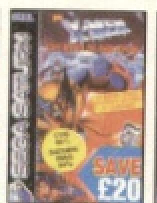
Looks deceive — this is the most playable football game for Saturn.























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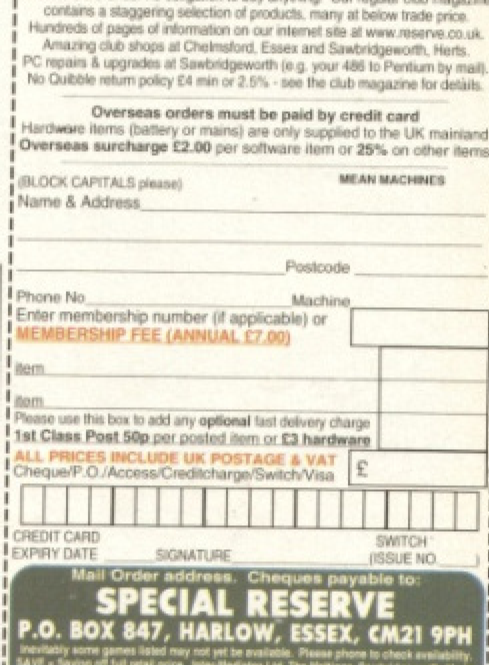
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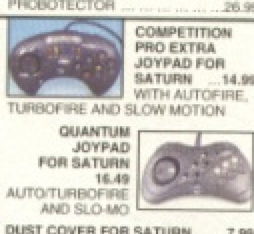
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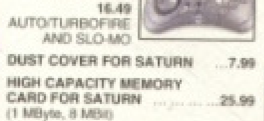
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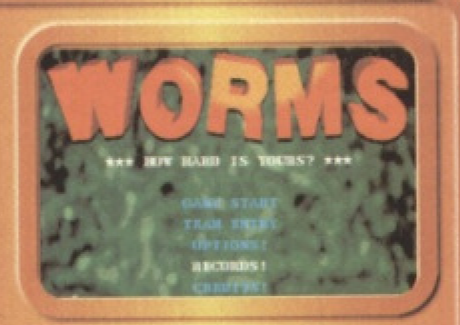
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BY: TEAM 17

RELEASE: AUGUST

PRICE: £39.99

GAME TYPE: STRATEGY



PLAYERS: 1-4

MEG: 8

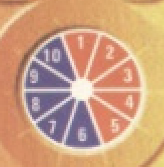
BREAK DOWN



ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION



STRATEGY



REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
TEAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

A 16-bit conversion of Team 17's major 32-bit hit of early '96.

GAME AIM

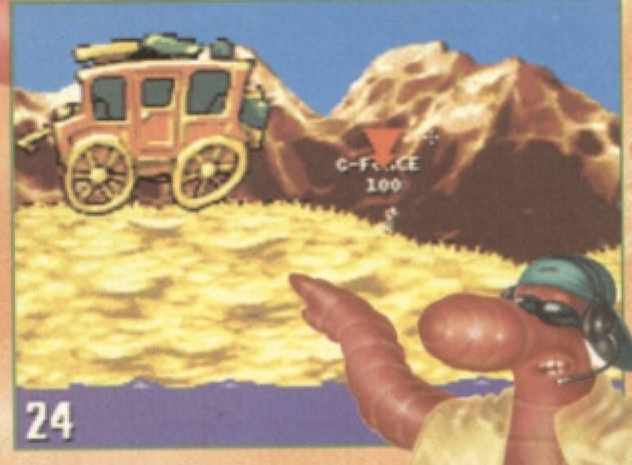
Pit worm against worm in a battle of heavy artillery, until one side only survives.

BEAT THIS

2-0 FIRST DAY

Against any serious expectation, Worms was a massive hit last Christmas. Team 17 had taken a year and a half to construct their answer to Lemmings: a realtime war game set with the most simplistic graphics imaginable for the 'superconsoles'. Many must have made derisive comparisons between it and titles like Ridge Racer or Virtua Fighter 2. It is rumoured that Sony of America steadfastly refused to accept the game unless it could be reprogrammed 'in 3-D'.

But who is still in the top five now? Worms is, while VF2 and RR are long since gone. Worms quickly developed a cult following, and a steady stream of buyers because it retained two vital and frankly un-32bit characteristics; playability and originality. Now it has come to the Megadrive, the simplicity is also an asset, as a conversion can be that more faithful.



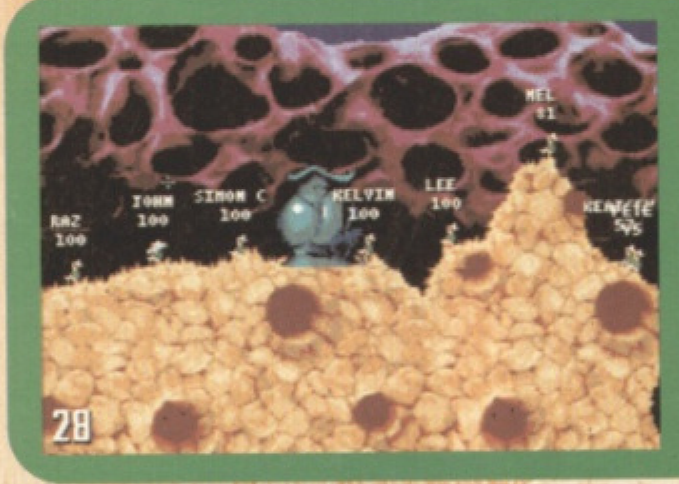








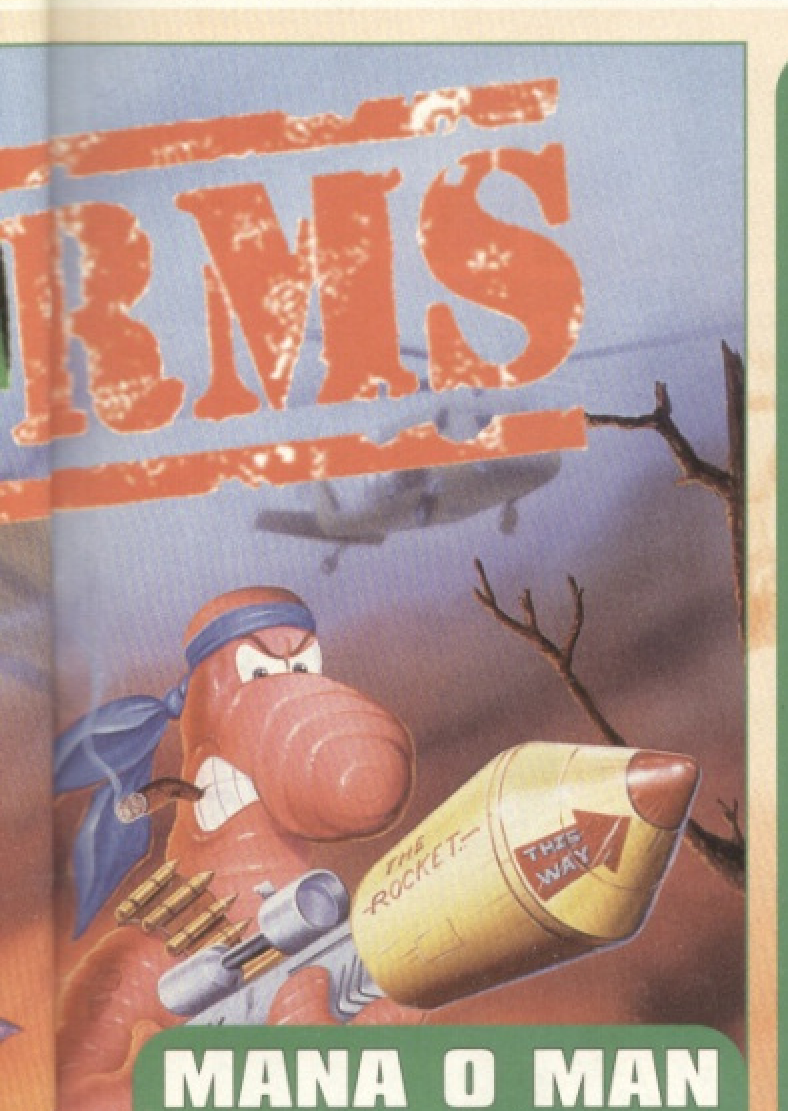




A SOLDIER'S STORY

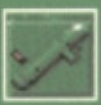
The worms face each other on a horizontal playfield, randomly generated from the Worms patented library of cheesy backdrops. Desert cacti, alpine snowmen, forest foliage; the one ubiquitous element is deadly water. A worm in water is an ex-worm (a useful piece of information). Up to four teams, computer or human can take part, each taking successive turns. They can be placed randomly or strategically before each encounter begins.





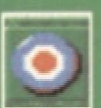
ARSENAL ABOUT

Using the right weapon at the right time is the key to success. A correctly aimed weapon will remove a portion of each worm's energy count, but play is more subtle than using the most destructive weapons (which are limited in any case). Weapons like Bazooka and grenade require you to determine a throwing distance, and also take account of wind. Weapons are:

 BAZOOKA

 DRAGON BALL

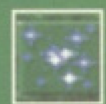
 GRENADE

 AIRSTRIKE

 CLUSTER BOMB

 BLOWTORCH

 SHOTGUN

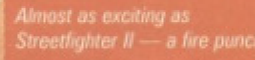
 TELEPORT

 UZI

 KAMIKAZE

 FIRE PUNCH





Almost as exciting as Streetfighter II — a fire punch.

DRILL

AIRSTRIKE

CLUSTER

MANA O MAN

Occasionally, a weapon crate will be parachuted in. These normally contain some of the juicer pieces of kit. The first worm to make it gets the booty for his team.





COMMENT



MARCUS

Unlike Lemmings, whose appeal has faded through over-familiarity and dubious attempts to 'upgrade' its gameplay, Worms is still top notch. The fact that this is a streamlined version takes little away from its overall appeal, although it's a shame the graphics couldn't have been made a bit sharper. There's little more to say about this – if you've missed out on one of the funniest multi-player experiences ever then I strongly recommend you redress your mistake.

COMMENT



GUS

If you were expecting an exact copy of Saturn Worms, you'll be disappointed. Some of the subtler points of gameplay, like weapon fuses, have been dispensed with. The graphics are quite a bit fuzzier, and that seems to matter when the detail is this small. The fact the FMV sequences are missing barely matters, as they offered few laughs in the original. At heart this is a multi-player game, the computer sometimes playing bizarrely, and if you have the mates, the little sacrifices in gameplay shouldn't register too much.



GRAPHICS 52
▼Small, fuzzy, uninspiring and ultimately unimportant.

ANIMATION 58
▼The Worms are comically animated, but not to those without the aid of an electron microscope

MUSIC 40
▲ The Worms theme, in all it's 'glory'.
▼Rounds are played out to an eerie battlefield silence.

EFFECTS 71
▲Sampled explosions, reloading and spot effects.
▼Not as many effects as the original.

PLAYABILITY 80
▲Multi-player is still a bit of a gas.
▼The CPU is not so much fun to tackle.

LASTABILITY 73
▲A late-night pub classic. Easy to pick up, and teams can be retained in memory.

OVERALL
Worms is fundamentally as wriggly as was. Something different from the platform game slough.

79



BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

RELEASE: JULY

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: DRIVING

BREAK DOWN



ORIGINALITY



CHALLENGE



ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1-2 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY

CONTINUES
UNLIMITED

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

One of the few great 3DO games, this was converted for PC and Playstation before appearing on Saturn.

GAME AIM

Select your speed machine and outrun your opponents – and the police! Avoid prangs, and a stay in the state penitentiary.

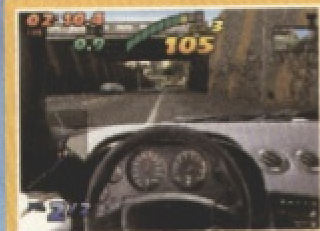
BEAT THIS

Second place in tournament mode.



Driving, or rather driving illegally, has been the subject of more bad films than perhaps anything else. You name it – Monte Carlo Or Bust, The Cannonball Run or the Gumball Rally – and it's probably pants. And it probably stars Burt Reynolds.

Fortunately, Pioneer's driving classic The Need For Speed is neither pants nor graced by Burt Reynolds. Leaving aside questions about whether those two facts are possibly connected, this game is best described as an edition of Top Gear on, er, speed. Choose from eight cars and eight tracks – you can even choose which time of day you'd prefer to take out the vehicle of your preference. Don't spend too long admiring some of the finest scenery the American continent has to offer – you'll be up against either another player, a computer-driven car, a pack of computer-controlled opponents or some particularly unsympathetic traffic cops. Get stopped by the fuzz once and you'll get a stern warning. Get stopped twice and they throw away the key. If the thought of out-running all the above doesn't concern you, and you aren't too bothered about the Burt Reynolds comparisons, then clunk-click for an afternoon spin with a difference.









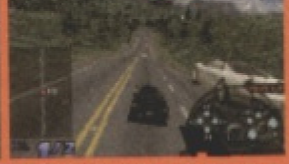
MEGA GAME

GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES

A huge array of choice awaits the Need For Speed player. The Race Type menu offers four different types of competition, all of which are self-explanatory. Once you've chosen the type of race you're interested in, progress to the Race Location menu. There are three race circuits, and three traditional road courses available. All three traditional scenarios are divided into three segments – you can access whichever one you like. For added excitement, you can select either Morning, Midday or Evening options for added atmos.



Select your choice of game on this menu.



The 'Highlights' function replays the computer's favourite bits.

CITY

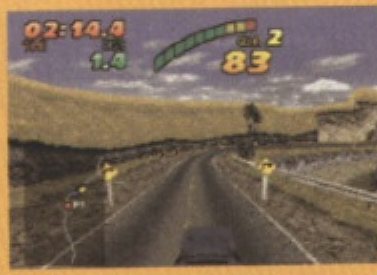
Three segments of multi-lane driving through the urban jungle, punctuated only by some impressive bridges. This should present few handling problems – in fact, the first segment is so straightforward that there's no excuse for failing to top 200 mph.

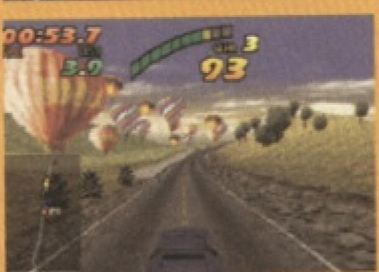




COASTAL

Admire the views, which include a spectacular hot air balloon launch, while driving beneath the palm trees in this tropical paradise. The third segment presents a couple of hairpin binds around a peninsula which is a real test of your handling.





ALPINE

Winding mountainside roads, poorly lit tunnels and, of course, other traffic, are the difficulties presented here. A herd of grazing cows provide the decoration. The third segment has an almost coastal feel, as you race around a road hugging the edge of a lake.



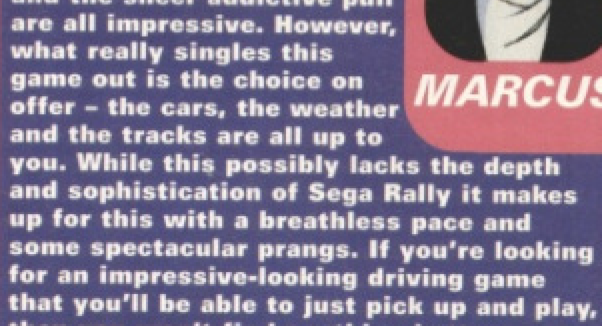




THE NEED FOR SPEED



COMMENT



MARCUS

There are many things to commend The Need For Speed – the quality of the graphics, the smooth animation, the easy playability and the sheer addictive pull are all impressive. However, what really singles this game out is the choice on offer – the cars, the weather and the tracks are all up to you. While this possibly lacks the depth and sophistication of Sega Rally it makes up for this with a breathless pace and some spectacular prangs. If you're looking for an impressive-looking driving game that you'll be able to just pick up and play, then you won't find anything better.

COMMENT

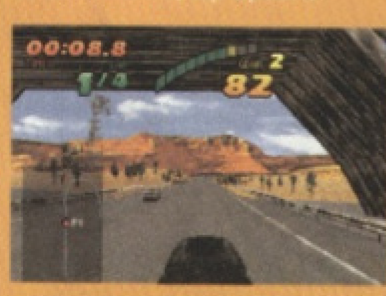


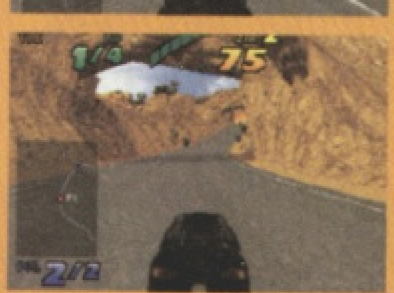
GUS

The Saturn has no shortage of first division racers; Daytona, Sega Rally, Wipeout. Need for Speed is now among them. The particular attraction of this game is the added twist of road driving. Rather than the sterile environment of a track, there exists the genuine feeling of haring down a public highway, with the possibility that a family saloon might be about to trundle into your path. The feeling of speed is supplemented by some great crashes, and the smart replay option. Maybe not up to the standard of the other three games mentioned, but what the hell – it's good.

RUSTY SPRINGS

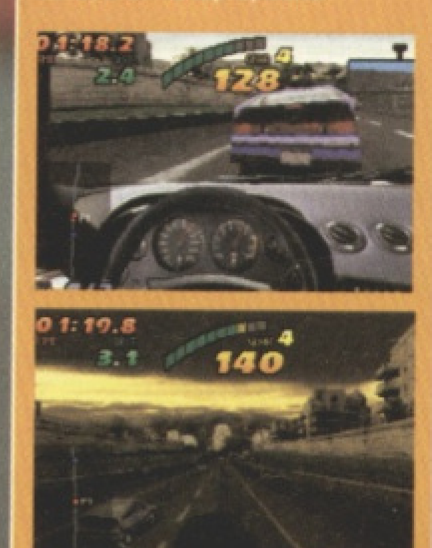
This desert circuit is the most basic scenario the game has to offer, and is ideal for getting the feel of your car. Simply race around the track, Indy 500 stylee, choosing between 4 (quick), 8 (normal) and 12 (endurance) lap options.





AUTUMN VALLEY

Huge grandstands and elaborate speedway bridges distinguish this twisty circuit. There's rarely a straight stretch of road, and speed freaks will have to sacrifice their adrenalin rushes simply to avoid crashes. 2, 6 or 12 lap options.



VERTIGO RIDGE

Another long and winding circuit, this time carved out of a snowy Swiss setting that lives up to its name with alarming undulations and dips. This is perhaps the most demanding of the three circuits and can be driven across 2, 6 or 12 laps.





GRAPHICS — 91

▲Lots of variety and a few surprises, including some impressive tunnels and bridges.
▼The mesh effect on the cars' exhaust clouds is terrible.

ANIMATION — 90

▲Very smooth. The speed of the game means that what little 'pop up' there is barely registers
▼Bridge and tunnel sections occasionally suffer from slight slow down.

MUSIC — 91

▲A wide choice of music styles, ranging from techno to heavy metal. Select the tunes of your choice. Most are good.

EFFECTS — 91

▲Very realistic, the highlight being the wind rushing past you when driving at speed.

PLAYABILITY — 90

▲Top notch. Very easy to get into and very addictive.
▼There's little to aim for and aspire to – this isn't as demanding as it could have been.

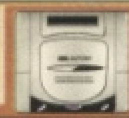
LASTABILITY — 90

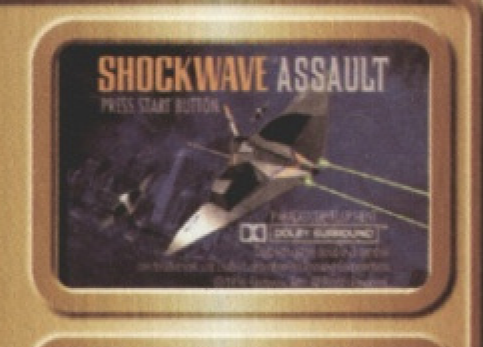
▲The variety of courses, cars and options should keep you on your toes, even if the police don't. There are also some surprises awarded for good performance...

OVERALL

This is well balanced, highly polished, and very rewarding. We love it.







BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

RELEASE: JULY

PRICE: £44.99

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS



ORIGINALITY

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
SAVED GAME

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
OK

CHALLENGE



ORIGIN

One of the original 3DO titles, this "interactive science-fiction movie" (aargh) mixes first-person space-blasting with dodgy FMV.

ACTION



STRATEGY

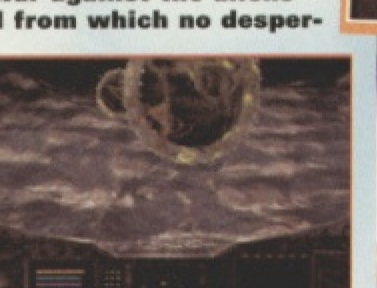
GAME AIM

The Earth of 2019 has been invaded by murderous aliens. Patrol the skies above the world's continents, eliminating the intruders.

REFLEXES

BEAT THIS

Complete third mission.



Welcome to hell. Never mind that a huge fleet of alien spaceships has penetrated the Earth's atmosphere ("there's thousands of them!" gasps the chick in the intro sequence) and that massive casualties are being reported in the global war against the aliens – this is blue screen hell. That FMV neverland from which no desperate actor ever returns.

While basically a straightforward 3D space blaster, Shock Wave Assault nevertheless makes great virtue of a developing plot progressed not only by you destroying everything in sight but by a load of blokes in a tiny studio pontificating about the carnage they're watching on the obligatory banks of television screens. Not that this isn't a serious matter – the year is 2019, and the crew of orbiting aircraft carrier UNS Omaha spot an alien invasion. As one of the ship's rookie pilots, you are assigned to join a squadron of chaps to take on the little green men. You are armed with twin laser cannons and a finite supply of missiles – much of your navigation is controlled by the computer which won't let you stray off the path of each mission's objective, leaving you to concentrate on the aliens, and leaving as much local architecture as possible intact. You're praised for good performance or slagged for being rubbish throughout each trip via a video link to the Omaha in your cockpit. "This isn't a game," warns your commander. We beg to differ.



SHOCKWAVE ASSAULT

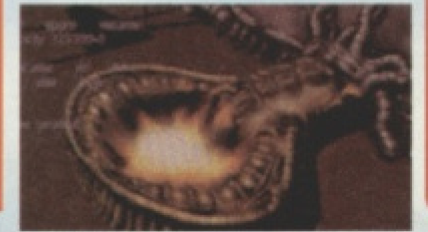






KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Devilishly cunning, those alien types. Gone are the days when your 'flying saucer' design was standard – in the year 2019 the rotters can disguise themselves as all manner of ne'erdowells. Pay careful attention...



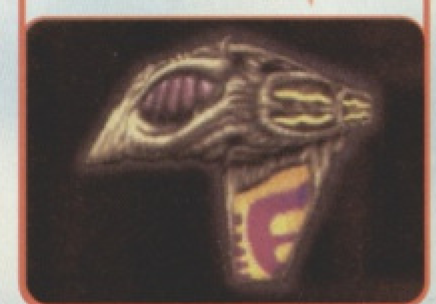
TRIPOD

These hovering insect-like contraptions boast a full 360 degree firing range, but are extremely slow-moving. Take care if they're lumbering anywhere near structures like pyramids, which you're expected not to damage.



INTERCEPTOR

Very nasty. These fighter ships have a top speed of Mach 2, and fire energy spheres which explode on contact. They do, however, prove easy targets when they're recharging – a couple of well-aimed missiles do the trick.













WAVE
ULT

COMMENT



MARCUS

While the plot details of Shock Wave Assault are actually quite clever (the idea of scuttling machines vacuuming gassed humans up and squirting them into alien prisons is actually quite creepy) and the FMV quite impressively staged, this falls apart nearly everywhere else. The acting is of the usual appalling standard, the game is incredibly repetitive and the graphics simply don't do justice to a 32-bit games console. And, as if to round off a thoroughly flawed experience, it all gets too difficult too quickly – missions can suddenly be terminated if your performance doesn't meet some very exacting standards. All of which is very frustrating if you're not clear about where you went wrong. What a miserable existence 3DO owners must have led.

COMMENT



GUS

Another little prezzie from the 3DO Appreciation Society. Some of that scabrous console's titles are worth bringing to Saturn owner's attention (eg. Need for Speed) while duffers like this should be given a wide berth. This has to be one of the most tedious shoot 'em ups since someone invented trench warfare. You wander around 'landscapes' shooting wave after wave of horribly drawn, trundling aliens (believing these places to look like LA or the Nile valley requires a squint and a lot of imagination). The more you play the more pointless the whole excercise appears. Unlikely to make waves with Saturn owners, shock or otherwise.





HEAT SEEKER

Twin-gunned alien craft that prove very difficult to shake off. A top speed of Mach 4 means they're tricky to out-run, but they lack manoeuvrability – a weakness the rookie Earth defender would do well to exploit.



COLLECTOR

Scuttling tank-like devices which suck in gassed human prisoners through an internal vacuum system. Easy pickings, but you'll find they're often buried amidst more dangerous opponents.



PRISON

Alien structures into which the collectors deposit gassed human prisoners. Each prison block is surrounded by energy cells that power a protective forcefield. Knock out these cells first.



GRAPHICS 44

▲The FMV sequences are of a good technical standard.
▼Landscapes are terribly blocky, each sequence being differently coloured variations on the same porridgy mass.

ANIMATION 53

▼A game of this type must be much less static than this appears to be. Very basic and blocky.

MUSIC 65



▼There isn't much, but there's some rumbling synth stuff which sets the mood.

EFFECTS 78



▲The Dolby Surround is used to good effect in creating a cinematic atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 50





▲If you're looking for a basic blaster then this does the business, but nothing more.
▼Games don't get much simpler than this. It gets terribly repetitive.

LASTABILITY 47

▼The FMV is amusing, then irritating. The gameplay is repetitive, then predictable.

OVERALL

This is a criminal under-use of the Saturn's potential. You don't need this game.



GHEN

First, all aliens were unfriendly. HG Wells' War of the Worlds (an epic struggle between two planets taking place in the Surrey commuter belt) set the tone for ET stories and later pics. Then all aliens were good – Steven Speilberg saw to that. Their jaunts to Earth were apparently just to take flower samples rather than stock up on human flesh. In Virgin's Ghen War, alien visitors form the basis of a plot linking twenty levels of Mechwarrior-style shootery. The Ghen have arrived seeking the assistance of the human race, and despite their Dr Who-esque appearance, have formed a mutually beneficial relationship with our species.

However, a planetery survey craft has witnessed suspicious behaviour from our extra-terrestrial 'friends' and is plunged into conflict with the entire Ghen nation. Using a mobile attack suit, missions on Mars, our moon and various other non-earth colonies must be completed to alert Earth to the Ghen threat.

GHEN WAR

Press START button

BY: GHEN WAR

RELEASE: JULY

PRICE: £39.99

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY



OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
NONE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

CHALLENGE



ORIGIN

Programmed originally for Sega of America, Virgin first published the game in Japan, and now here.

ACTION



STRATEGY



GAME AIM

Defeat the Ghen over twenty diverse 3-D missions.

REFLEXES

BEAT THIS

COMPLETE LEVEL 4

SPACE 44.99 - The mission position...

SHOOTING REACTORS

Spinning polygons circle the reactor erections. Take out these Ghen power points.

MINING SABOTAGE

A single explosive from one part of the level will destroy the entire refining operation.



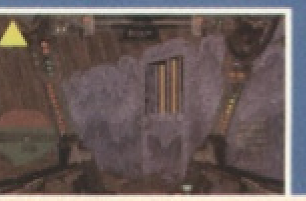


PRISONERS

Just find the cell and blow it to kingdom come.

NUCLEAR KEY

20 cubes will create a key for a nuclear device, but one guarded by a huge monster.



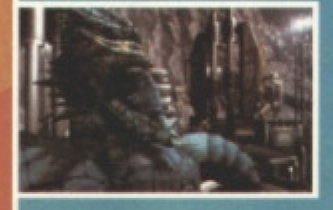


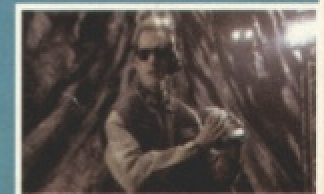
SMELLO DRAMA

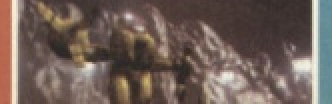
Oh dear. More FMV bollocks to move the story along. More 'get your kit and get ready to go to Mars'. More harassed captains, 'urgent incoming messages', crummy special effects and wise-cracking helmsmen. Lots more.









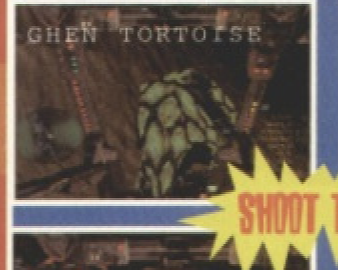




MOONWALK

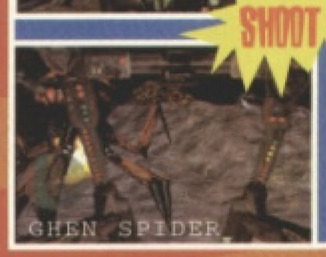
Ghen warring entails wandering round inhospitable lunar terrains in your metal space suit (which looks a bit like the yellow power loader from Aliens). This has a formidable range of weaponry you're just forced to employ against the Ghen, who possess an impressive fleet of space vehicles themselves. The twenty missions often involve more than just fighting – you'll have to collect 'energy cubes' and destroy forcefield reactors.







SHOOT THESE



GHEN TURRET

ONE GIANT LEAP

The fact you can jump in Ghen War makes it less Doom and more Gun Griffon (import game reviewed a couple of months back). However, most levels take place in an enclosed maze-like series of corridors. The later stages are actually set in a Doom-style complex with doors and lifts, reducing the scope for high altitude antics.

JUMP



Ghen basic training module 1: Forget negotiation. Resistance is useful.

WAR

Virgin's product placement on the 'extra life' cubes!

KIT

HOMING MISSILE

TWIN MISSILE

GRENADE

MINE

HEAT-SEEKER

DECOY

ENERGY

SHIELD

ENERGY CUBE

COMMENT

MARCUS

Someone clearly sat down with one of those 3-D game engines (you know, the ones that assemble the horizon line about two feet in front of you with those blocky polygons – see Black Fire and StarFighter 3000 for further illustration) and dreamed up an alien invasion plot. Then they went out and shot the obligatory dire FMV stuff. And designed some interesting levels. And then they forgot about the most important bit – the gameplay. This is pretty, but there's just not enough going on.

COMMENT

GUS

The first time I played this game (Sega were hawking it around a few months back) I thought 'Hmmm, they should release it'. 'They' has become Virgin and, rather unfairly, I've changed my mind. It's not that Ghen War is particularly poor; the polygon graphics are reasonable and move smoothly. Some of the enemies are well designed and someone has at least tried to be imaginative when it comes to level design. It's just the whole thing lacks any verve, excitement, sparkle, whatever. I'm not slagging off someone's hard work, but I haven't noticed anyone sitting down to play Ghen War out of anything but pure duty. For Saturn owners who have a history of playing similar-looking PC games like Mechwarrior (and enjoying them) might want to look at Ghen War.


"Corks! I think it's blown a fuse!"

GRAPHICS

76

▲ Crisp polygons, particularly the enemies and power-ups.

▼ Everything is so dark, depressing and fades out to quickly.

ANIMATION

73

▲ Background movement is smooth, the enemy animation is slick.

▼ The progressive shading of scenery polygons is clumsy and noticeable.

MUSIC

69

▲ Ambient...ambient... ambient.

EFFECTS

64

▼Crashes, bangs and wallops that have no particular originality.

PLAYABILITY

72

▲ A fair amount of novelty value and interest at how the game develops.

▼ Slow moving and repetitive at heart.

LASTABILITY

69

▲ Lots more missions...

▼ ...Than you'd actually really want to play. But the game develops a bit.

OVERALL

Ghen War is a bit like a night in front of the telly. Therefore, best enjoyed with a tube of Pringles.


71

BLACK FIRE

The best episodes of The X Files are always those where our intrepid heroes stumble upon bits of flying saucer that the US government has tucked away inside some remote warehouse.
But whereas the FBI simply wave their flashlights about and get knocked unconscious, the protagonist in Black Fire had the good sense to pocket some souvenirs. The chap in question, one Commander Kane, does a runner with the gear and uses the technology to construct some pretty whacko weaponry. Worse than that, it seems he's invited some mates over from outer space to join the party.



The only thing standing between this nutter and world domination is you in your super duper helicopter Black Fire. What this game basically comes down to eliminating anything that moves in new and inventive ways using a staggering array of 21st century weaponry. A brave and challenging concept, we know, but like all dirty jobs, someone's got to do it.

RELEASE: ....JULY
PLAYERS:........................1
BY: ....VIRGIN

MEG:..................................CD
PRICE:.........................£44.99
GAME TYPE:..COPTER SIM


GRAPHICS  75
Sturdy scenarios, but disappointingly shallow field of vision.

EFFECTS 70
It's all a bit flat.


ANIMATION  72
Blocky explosions but everything moves at a pace.


PLAYABILITY 72
Unusual controls and overwhelming odds don't help.


MUSIC  75
Sort of well 'ard gung-ho-type stuff that does the busiiness


LASTABILITY 68
There are plenty of levels, but most are too difficult.


OVERALL  70
Rock hard copter frenzy that doesn't stand comparison with Thunderhawk 2.


This bonus mission puts you under a strict time limit as you patrol near an enemy warehouse and a convoy of trucks doubtless packed full of space aliens. Or something.



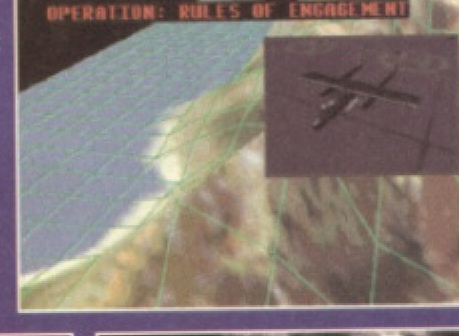
COMMENT


MARCUS

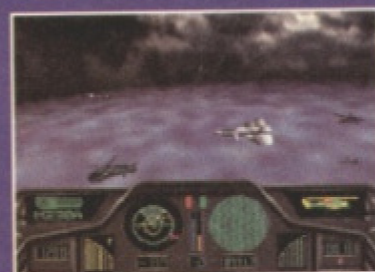
This is a fair attempt at a familiar scenario – anyone who's played Hi-Octane or Magic Carpet will recognise the looming horizon lines that seem to be a trademark of this type of game. Black Fire seems to suffer more obviously than most. Elsewhere this is fairly straight-forward, if unsophisticated, stuff that suffers from being far too challenging for its own good. If you're ready to devote yourself to an action-intensive copter game then this is worth looking at – but think about Thunderhawk 2 first.

OPERATION FLYMO

There are five main levels in the campaign against Commander Kane and his 'Sword of Gideon' forces. Each level is divided into three separate missions, which a few bonus levels thrown in for good measure. The action takes you to such diverse locations as Alaska and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado – the targets include a crude oil refinery, a heliport and an oil rig. Kane's forces are well armed and boast considerable manpower – be prepared for anything from Cruise missiles to suicide bombers.



However your targets differ in their speed and mobility, your weaponry will be able to cope. Machine guns are best employed for land strafing while your limited supply of heat-seeking missiles are devastating anywhere.



COMMENT


GUS

This game is difficult to the point of "you're 'avin' a laugh mate". But it's not funny when you're mobbed by a thousand flying sprites the minute you start a level. The simply shaded landscape and borderline jerky screen update are all pretty irrelevent anyway because, as Marcus rightly pointed out, we've already GOT a brilliant helicopter game at home and it's called Thunderhawk 2. So it's bedtime for Black Fire, really.



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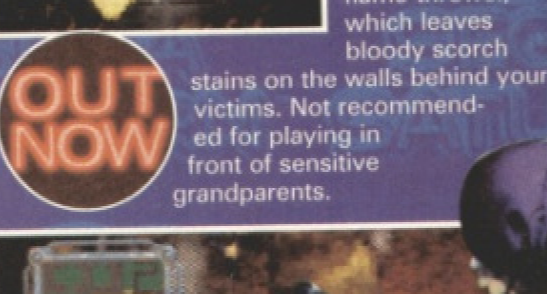
helping your computer games budget go even further.



A veritable cornucopia of future classics are hitting your shop shelves now. This month we skim the cream of an unusually high quality crop of new releases. And revisit the truly staggering Revolution X...

LOADED
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
GREMLIN
BLAST 'EM UP

This is an excellent conversion of the gory Playstation game that appeared at the beginning of this year. Looking much like an animated 2000AD strip, the game sees you select one of six criminal reprobates (each with different weapons, armour and agility) to bust out of a maximum security prison. It's actually a bit more complicated than that, but minor details like plot soon fall by the wayside as you torch everything to oblivion. Although undeniably repetitive, there's a wide variety of opponents – everything from rats to straight-jacketed head-butting psychos are thrown into the mix. Clear the way with the weapon of your choice – the office favourite is the flame-thrower, which leaves bloody scorch stains on the walls behind your victims. Not recommended for playing in front of sensitive grandparents.



OUT NOW

GUN GRIFFON
£44.99
1-2 PLAYER
SEGA
SHOOT 'EM UP

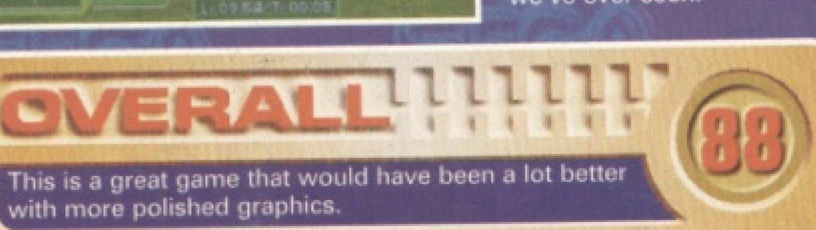




The format of 'two-legged gun-bristling hopping armoured thing game' is unique, even if the scenarios you hop, cruise and hover around are fairly familiar – inner cities, foggy days, snowy wastes and what appears to be my local park. OK, my local park won't look that familiar, but you know the scene. Your 'griffon' is armed with a machine gun, rocket propelled grenades and anti-tank missiles and pitted against a variety of mechanised opponents. For the levels set in night-time, green-screen thermal imagery can be pressed into service for picking your way around ruined buildings and spotting looming targets. To get a better view of each area, you can hover in mid-air for limited periods. This only really falls down with its blocky in-game graphics, although the lengthy intro sequence (which employs the new 'Trumotion' technique) is one of the best we've ever seen.

OUT NOW





OVERALL 88

This is a great game that would have been a lot better with more polished graphics.

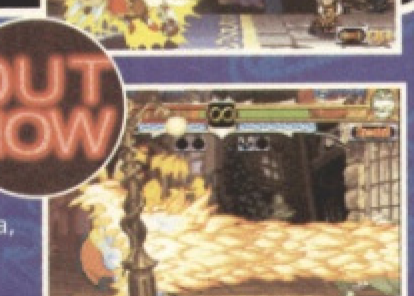


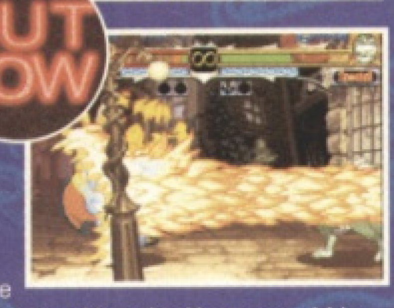
OVERALL 93

Outrageous, gory, brutal and compelling. Loaded rocks.

VAMPIRE HUNTER
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
VIRGIN
BEAT 'EM UP

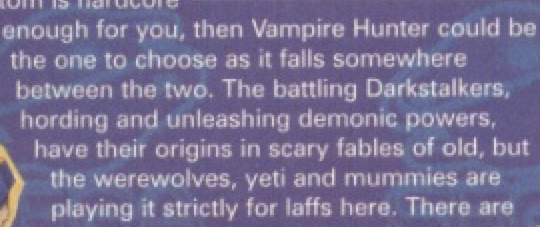






OUT NOW

From Capcom, the undisputed masters of the 2D beat 'em up, comes a superb conversion of Vampire Hunter. If you're daunted or simply uninspired by Streetfighter Alpha, and if you don't reckon X-Men: Children of the Atom is hardcore enough for you, then Vampire Hunter could be the one to choose as it falls somewhere between the two. The battling Darkstalkers, hording and unleashing demonic powers, have their origins in scary fables of old, but the werewolves, yeti and mummies are playing it strictly for laffs here. There are more characters and moves than in X-Men, and everything seems more outrageous and cartoony. There's huge scope here for beginners and experts alike, just so long as you don't take your beat 'em ups too seriously.



OVERALL 94

Surely the silliest of Capcom's 'big three', and at least as good as its excellent stablemates.

REVOLUTION X
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
ACCLAIM
SHOOT 'EM UP



OUT NOW

OK, it's like this – the bad guys have taken over the world, imprisoned loads of Californian beach babes, stamped out rock & roll and, worst of all, kidnapped Aerosmith. Armed with a load of, er, flying CDs, liberate the babes, the tunes and the good ol' boys. In real terms this involves keeping your finger pressed down on the fire button and directing your fire towards anything on the screen that moves. There is next to no skill required – the sprites are incredibly repetitive, predictable and very blocky. Oh, and there are a couple of Aerosmith's best-known tunes in the soundtrack. Which doesn't help.

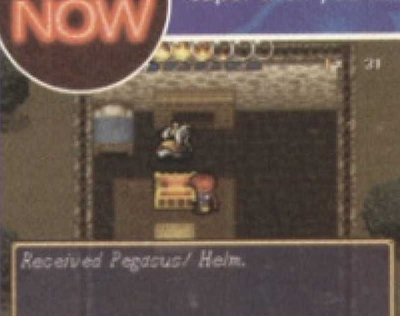
OVERALL



34

A real endurance test in more ways than one. This is absolutely dire.

SHINING WISDOM
£44.99
1 PLAYER
SEGA
RPG





OUT NOW

All those who speak in hushed tones about Shining Force on the Megadrive should go for this, as should anyone who rated the Zelda series on the SNES. It's the continuing adventures of the Weeble warriors as you play the wandering hero in this vast game. If you're curious about the meandering plot, have a flick through our epic guide over the last few issues. Suffice to say this will keep you busy for weeks, and is made all the more playable by the substitution of tedious drawn-out battle sequences for real time skirmishes. The only flies in the ointment are the rather primitive graphics, but don't let that put you off. If you've got the brain for this sort of caper then you won't be disappointed.

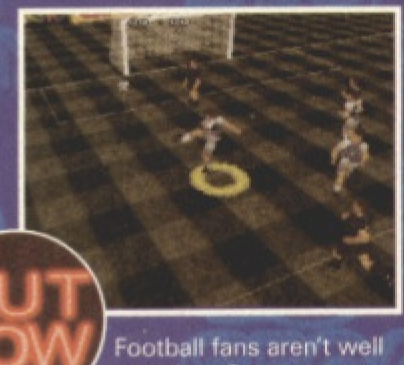
OVERALL



92

You won't find a more playable, or more challenging, RPG.

EURO '96
£44.99
1-2 PLAYERS
SEGA
FOOTBALL



OUT NOW

Football fans aren't well served on Saturn at present – Victory Goal's a duffer and FIFA 96 is already starting to show its age. Both are outgunned by the impressive Euro '96. Players move realistically, the research is meticulous (even of one of the stadiums looks a bit suspect) and the sometimes tricky controls reward you with a good variety of player skills. The grounds themselves (all the actual ones the championships were played in) offer six different camera perspectives on the action. The highlight of the game, however, is the superb commentary by Barry Davies – a revelation for all those disappointed by John Motson's narrow selection of stock phrases in FIFA. Next generation football games are a rapidly developing art and the best is certainly yet to come. However, Euro '96 sets the standard for now.

OVERALL



90

Not without faults, but currently the finest footy game around.



I thought it couldn't happen. I mean, I've been here since Jaz was knee-high to a PC Engine. But last month I got threatened with the sack. "Yob," they said, "you seem to be having some difficulties communicating with your readership. They have different wants, different needs. You're tired, you're lame. Take a few days in the country. Don't come back." It was a bit of a shock. I mutely cleared my desk. But then one call to my old mate Lord Emap from his pal Yobby, and it was them sampling the delights of Easy St. TOSSAS! Write your serious mail to ALL NEW MEAN YOB, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

DRIBBLE IN PANTS

Dear Yob,
You're not funny any more. The whole Mean Yob idea isn't funny. Anyone who gets thrills out of writing in to insult you must be very sad. I used to like it when people wrote in with real problems and you used to take the mick out of them, but now you're about as funny as Russ Abbott. MMS is really good and goes down well with a cup of tea and a brandy snap but why should I waste my time reading the letters sent to you in the hope of finding a decent or funny reply? It's the same old drivel like, "Why do you dribble in your pants?" These are the kinds of questions people with the IQ of a bird table ask. Mean Yob is the biggest waste of two innocent pieces of paper I have ever seen in my life. And I don't mean to pry into your sex life, but what is this fascination with baboons? I'm going to ask you to follow Pepsi's example and change the script!
Michael Turner, Surrey.
YOB:Go perform a reverse bowel movement with a frozen black pudding... wait maybe you have a point. Maybe I have been indulging myself for the last few months, but most of you lot have been GAGGING for it. I have no objection to serious argument, but it's you lot that have to string it together. As for Pepsi 'changing the script' what a non-event. They spent a mint on those ads, which are all crap if one is. Yob doesn't change his colours quite so easily.

Akuma rates Ryan Hunter's likeness on a scale of one to ten. Only joking Ryan. It's worth at least two.

BROWN FROTH OF CRAP

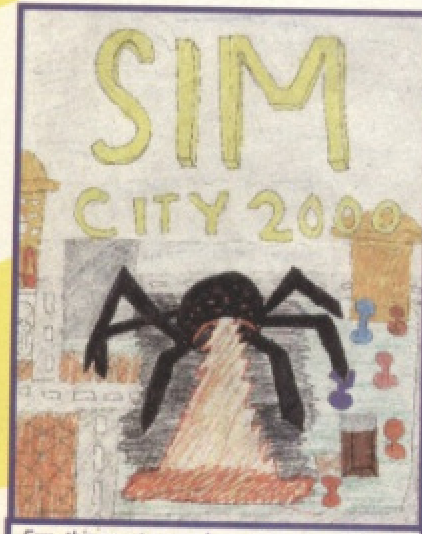
Dear Yob,
Is Mario coming out on the Master System? Will you review PlayStation games soon? Can I have some cheats for Altered Beast and Last Battle?
Well, I had you going for a minute there. It is me, the King of Otaku That's "obsessed Manga fan" for all you illiterates out there) Paul Johnson. This month I was shocked by three things: 1) My envelope art getting printed in MEAN MACHINES; 2) The news that the huge US Anime people AD Vision were coming to the UK and are doing a competition with your mag and; 3) Well, I walked into Skegness Pier. As we know, "Skegness is sooooo bracing." Its sea is a brown froth of floating crap, its air is as refreshing as exhaust fumes. Coke costs about £9 a can. As for games, well the newest game in the Skegness arcade is Ms Pac Man. So I fainted from shock at the sight of a shiny new Street Fighter Zero II cabinet staring me in the face!
Anyway, it's damn good. I'm not a huge Street Fighter fan, but this game outstrips all other fighting games by a mile. I like the way that Capcom brought back some Final Fight characters in SF Zero (or SF Alpha as it's been pointlessly renamed here) like Sodom (Katana on the Mega CD) and Guy, but it was a master stroke to bring in Rolento (the industrial stage boss) for Zero II. Have you played this excellent game yet? Any views? The best thing though, is that it has the hardest, most terrifyingly unbeatable character ever seen! Sagat? Sorry, go away. Ryu? Cower in fear, pyjama-wearer! Bison? No chance. All of them are nothing compared to the new girl...Sakura! Aaargh! Take her away! She may look like a small cheerful Manga-style schoolgirl, but she'll kill everyone, I tell you! Help me, I'm scared.
I'm working on a new painting for the letters page in the hope that you'll print it. What is it? Wait and see...
P.S. PJ & Duncan stole my name, not the other way round. They die!
Paul Johnson, Otakuland.
YOB:Nice to see you getting out PJ, even if it is onto the sewage outlet Skegtossers call a pier. Where the hell did they get a SFZII cabinet from? Must be part of that Skegness arcade heist reported in the Gillingham advertiser. Anyway, where the flick is Skegness anyway? I've just asked the entire office and, would you credit it, nobody knows. Answers on a crappy spring-flowers-of-Skegness postcard please.



The return of Ryan Button, and his Mortal Kombat masterpiece. Ryan's still saving for some crayons.

SAD LONELY ADULT

Dear Yob,
I would like to raise a point of argument with you. I have read with great interest the letters submitted by Mr Henshaw of Peterborough. I have also read letters submitted by Mr P Johnson [both in Issue 44]. I found that of the two aforementioned persons the former has more to contribute to your magazine. I also believe that Mr Henshaw gives more to your sad column that Mr Johnson's pathetic ramblings. It is obvious that Mr Henshaw is a juvenile that is succumbing to your needs, whereas Mr Johnson is a sad lonely adult who only writes to MEAN MACHINES when Dear Deidre is on holiday.
M. Shawlen, Peterborough, Cambs.
YOB:So you must be Mark Henshaw's 'close friend'. Just how close do you get, Yob wonders? I hope you don't 'suck up to him', but this letter suggests otherwise. Henshaw made out he'd rip my arms off for not giving him MK3



Erm, this exact scene has yet to crop up in our copy of Sim City 2000. More's the pity.

cheats. But I sent him back to the carpark crapheap that is Peterbrough, and let's just say the legs of his cordorouys were not rubbing at the groin.

FART OUT THE ODD CRAP RELEASE

Dear Yob,
I thought I'd write to you in order to have a bit of a rant about what's happening to the Megadrive. As far as I know, the Megadrive is still Sega's most popular format in this country, and yet they continue to neglect the machine in terms of new games. Yes, there was Toy Story a few months ago, but since then there has only been the likes of Cutthroat Island – a truly crappy game. There was a time when the Megadrive had several new releases every month but now they just seem to fart out the odd crap release every month...if we're lucky! How can Sega continually neglect the format which brought them so much success over the years? There are still lots of Megadrive users out there, all so hungry for new games they would even buy Brian Lara Cricket. I know the Saturn is an amazing machine and well worth the coverage it receives, but come on Mr Sega – please don't forget all us poor 16-bit owners.
Paul Dennett, Blackpool.

YOB:MEAN MACHINES is determined not to neglect the Megadrive, but in the last few months Sega have made it quite difficult. I quite agree there should have been more action in the first half of the year, but there were a lot of Christmas games 'clogging the channels'. Now things are on the mend: we have three Megadrive previews this month, and the promise of half a dozen cream titles to come from Sega. But it's the Sega Channel that will bring the Megadrive back from the gaming wilderness, I promise you.

I CHOKE AS I SAY THESE WORDS

Dear Yob,
Thank you for producing what is the best Sega magazine around, even though I do still buy Sega Power. My cousin owns a SNES and has told me that he wants to buy a Nintendo 64. I choke as I say these words because I own a Sega Saturn, a Megadrive and a Game Gear – there are great games on all of them, especially the Saturn. However, I can't believe that Nintendo and Sega are teaming up together so they can get Sonic off us. Why is this occurring? Anyway, keep up the good work and may your magazine live forever and ever.
Matthew Bullman, Castleford, West Yorkshire.

YOB:You sound a bit confused. Put your head between your legs and munch on a banana. Sonic is not coming to the SNES or the Nintendo 64. Sonic is only coming to Saturn, Megadrive and Game Gear. What's coming to Nintendo 64? Wayne Gretzky Hockey, that's what.



A big thank you to Michael Laing for this. Ask Santa for some felt tips, eh Mike.

And that was Yob for another month, hopefully adding a bit more to the debates that shape the software world. Join me again next month for some more tolley's letters.



Someone suggested in the pub, while watching the Holland vs Scotland match in Euro '96, that I don't know the words to 'Flower of Scotland' Absurd! As I shall now demonstrate...
Oh Flower of Scotland,
When will we see your likes again.
That fought and died for
Yer wee bit Highland glen.
And stood against them (who?)
Proud Edward's army
And sent them homeward
Tae think again.
I am, of course, a Flower of Scotland, but I'm not sure which species.
Answers on the back of a packet of cabbage seeds to:

THE TARTAN ARMY Q&A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP IMAGES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.



BACON FRAZZLES

Dear Gus,
I'm fed up with writing to you. Just print this and I'll keep quiet for at least a week.
1. I'm going to Italy soon. I presume they sell Saturn games over there – will they be compatible with my English Saturn?
2. If they will be, do you know the Italian for 'FOR USE WITH PAL AND FRENCH SECAM SYSTEMS'?
3. Will Italian controllers work on PAL machines?
4. Why don't magazines review games when they are out for the general public to buy?
I'm not leaving my name because you've probably got a bin in my office with my name on because every time you get a letter from me you obviously throw it away.

GUS:1.There should be no problem with Italian discs, but they won't be any cheaper.
2.Justa wan Saturno, geev eet to mee!
3.Yes, all controllers work on all machines.
4.Sometimes games slip. We always try to get this month's games in the Out Now section.

CHEESE PRINGLES

Dear Gus,
1. As Saturn games develop, how much can the clipping seen in games like Daytona and Sega Rally improve?
2. In your opinion, what is the best Saturn sports game?
3. is there going to be a Virtua Cop 3, and if there is will Sega incorporate a foot pedal, as in Time Crisis?
Dan Cox, Bath Somerset.

GUS:**1. The improvement is gradual, but the potential for improvement is finite. Only so many polygons are possible within a cycle. Poor clipping is a result of trying to overachieve and failing cosmetically. In terms of technical ability, Sega Rally represents "66% of Saturn's capacity" (Yu Suzuki, AM2)**
2. The forthcoming Worldwide Soccer, but don't tell Sega I said that.
3. I've no idea, but I hope they come up with a better idea than that crappy gimmick.

PICKLED ONION SPACE RAIDERS

Dear Gus,
1. Do you think it's worth getting Ultimate MK3 if I already have Virtua Fighter 1 and 2?
2. Is there going to be a sequel to D?
3. Is it worth getting Sim City 2000 if I've already got Theme Park?
4. Steve pronounces Sega 'Seega'. How do you pronounce it?
J.L. Mosson, London.

GUS:**1. Do you like the arcade UMK3, is the more relevent question? Do you want it at home? If 'yes' to both get it.**
2. Not a sequel as such, but the Laura character stars in 'Enemy Zero', Warp's next game (see news).
3. The games are different. I'd say so.
4. It's Say-ga. Definitely.

PRAWN COCKTAIL DISCOS

Dear Gus,
1. I've finished F1 Challenge on Saturn – will there be a sequel?
2. Is there going to be anything as good as Flashback coming out on Saturn?
3. Is there going to be a Thunderhawk 3?
4. Is there a good golf game on the way?
G. Goldsmith, Essex.

GUS:**1. Probably not.**
2. Heart of Darkness from Flashback creator Frederik Savoir — an exclusive on Saturn!
3. Very probably.
4. Actua Golf looks superb.

CHEESY WOTSITS

Dear Gus,
1. While going through the voice test on Virtua Fighter 32X, I found a voice that said 'Sudden Death'. I assume this means there's a fatality mode in the game. Am I right?
Alistair Cairns, Grantham, Lincs.

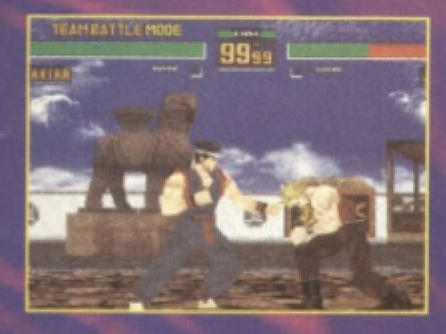
GUS:**1. No, it's a mode where a single hit results in death.**

MONSTER MUNCH

Dear Gus,
I am hoping to buy a Sega Saturn in the next few months and would like you to answer few basic questions for me.
1. I have an old RF television and a VCR with a scart socket. Could I play the Saturn through the VCR, saving me having to get an RF lead? I tried playing my Megadrive through my VCR and the picture went fuzzy.
2. Weighing up all the pros and cons, which would be the better



buy for a Saturn football game – Euro 96 or FIFA 96?
P.M.Ubel, London.
GUS**1. If it's a PAL Saturn, it should work through the video without a problem.**
2. Euro '96 beats Fifa.

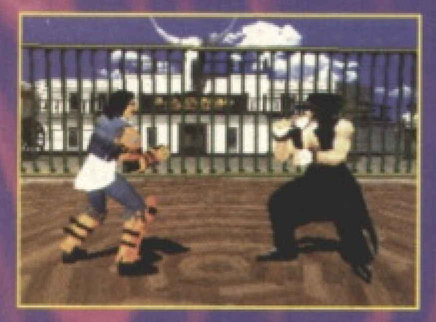


OUTER SPACERS

Dear Gus,
1. Will Virtua Fighter 2 or Virtua Cop be coming out on the 32X?
2. Do you think it's worth getting a 32X and Virtua Fighter? I'm dying to play it.
Martin Scott, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
GUS:**1. No.**
2. Let's be candid. The 32X is not a great prospect if you want the latest games. At £199 a Saturn is the sensible long-term investment

SALT 'N' SHAKE

Dear Fungus,
Please answer these questions for me and my friends. There are 30 of us, and if you don't answer our letter we will stop buying this mag and start buying Maximum instead!
1. Have you seen Virtua On? What the hell is it about and how does it look?
2. Which of these titles will be the best: Daytona Deluxe, Manx TT, Virtua Cop 2, Virtua Fighter 3 or Fighting Vipers?
3. Is there any news yet of Sega Rally 2? If not, do you have a hunch?
4. Do you think Ridge Racer Revolution is better than Sega Rally? Say yes and we'll hurt you.
5. How much will the Saturn's internet connection cost?
6. Will Quake be released on the Saturn?
P.S. We meant what we said in question 4!
Paul Rooney, Litherland, Merseyside.
GUS:**Go ahead punk, make my day. 1. It's Virtual (note the 'L') On. It's a bizarre robot combat game, much more mobile than VF2. Players hurl incredible attacks at each other while running around a polygon arena. It's fab, hugely popular in Japan and set for a very good conversion.**
2. It's too early to judge the conversions, but I'm personally looking forward to Fighting Vipers



and Manx TT.
3. No. I have no hunches.
4. I can safely avoid injury. RRR is a mere SHADOW of Sega Rally's magnificence.
5. Probably £199.
6. Yes, for December.

CHIP STICKS

Dear Gus,
1. What do you think of X-Men:Children of the Atom?
2. Is there any way of connecting the Saturn to a stereo?
3. When will Virtua Fighter 3 be coming out over here?
4. Do you have a release date for the Saturn 2?
5. How will it differ from the first one?
6. How much will it cost?
Steven Rawlinson, Wavertree, Liverpool.
GUS:**1. Jap version: brilliant, PAL conversion: so-so.**
2. Through a VCR is the easiest way. A composite input also works, but is fiddlier to arrange.
3. Sometime 1997.
4/5. There will be no Saturn 2/Flash Saturn launch in the UK. The rearranged insides will hide in the familiar black case.
6. £199





BENSON'S READY SALTED

Dear Gus,
1. Will Capcom's Dungeons & Dragons coin-op be converted to Saturn? Most of their other decent arcade games have been.
2. Will Street Fighter Alpha 2 come out on the Saturn? If so, when?
3. Will the Saturn be able to produce a good conversion of Sonic Fighters?
4. When is the s*** hot Championship Manager 2 coming out on the Saturn?
5. When is Snoop Doggy Dogg's new album being released?
Daz, West Coast.
GUS:**1. Legends of Mystara? Nah.**
2. Yes, for Christmas.
3. Theoretically, but I'm not sure if that's being converted now.
4. Nobody's bothering with that at the present. Shame.
5. No idea, write to SELECT.



Anything I don't know ain't worth knowing. Write and ye shall be answered. See ya soon.

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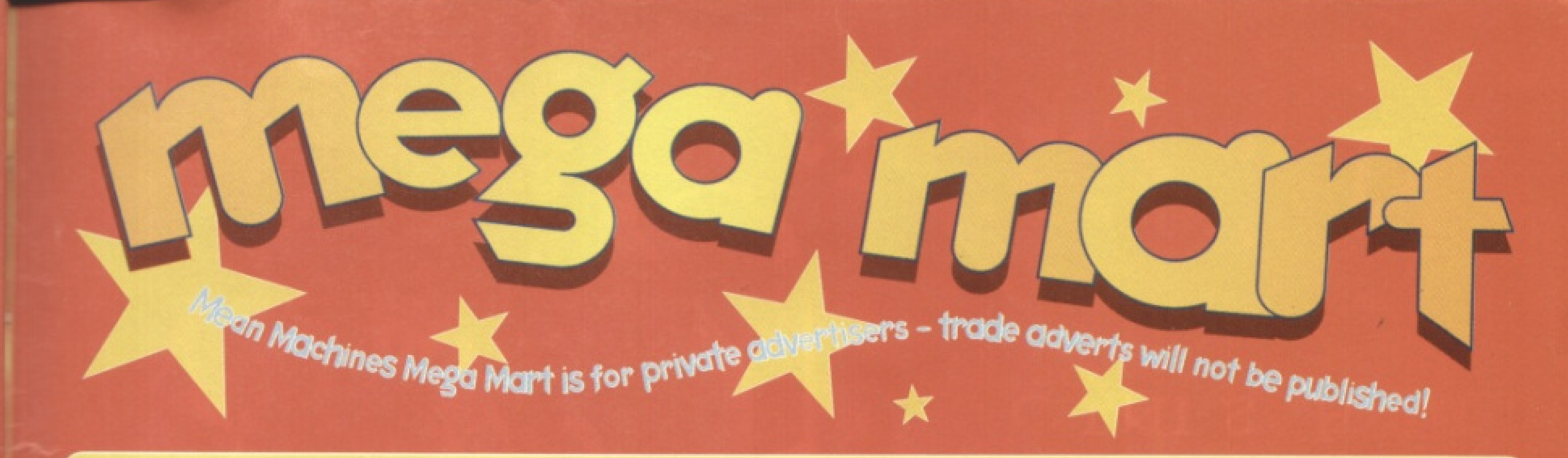
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NIGHTS INTO DREAMS!

Open your eyes, don't close them! MEAN MACHINES has the first review of the UK version of NiGHTS next issue. Review presentation of a level unrivalled by any other mag.

THE ADVENTURES OF LARA!

MEAN MACHINES has secured Tomb Raider for a unique magazine presentation – the graphic adventures of Lara Croft. The greatest comic artists in the UK fashion a story that will make the next four issues of MEAN MACHINES collectors' items. Don't miss this amazing Exclusive.

SANTA'S WISH LIST!

We'll have details of the massive titles set to dominate the big-selling period of 1996. We ain't playing any more: expect a taste of Alien Trilogy and Probe, an exclusive preview of Tunnel B1, Swagman, Grand Theft Auto, Decathlete, Soviet Strike and Bug Too, too. Reviews of Blam:Machinehead, Thor, Olympic Games, and many more.

16 BLITZ!

The Megadrive's making a comeback. Features on hot titles like X-Women, reviews of Prince of Persia 2 and Whizz and the exclusive update on Sonic 3-D. Now is all that not something to think about?

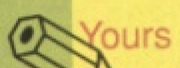
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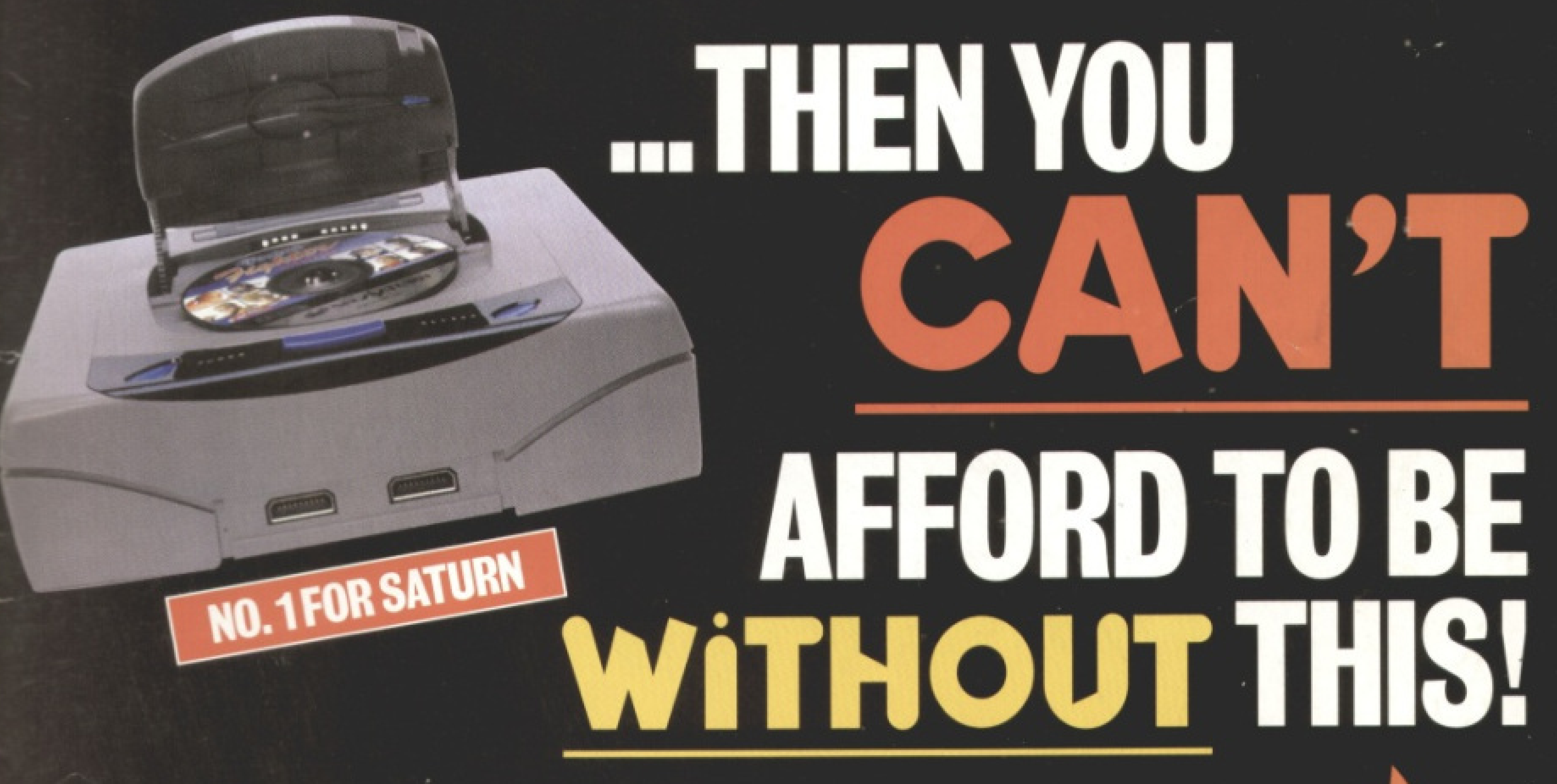

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